

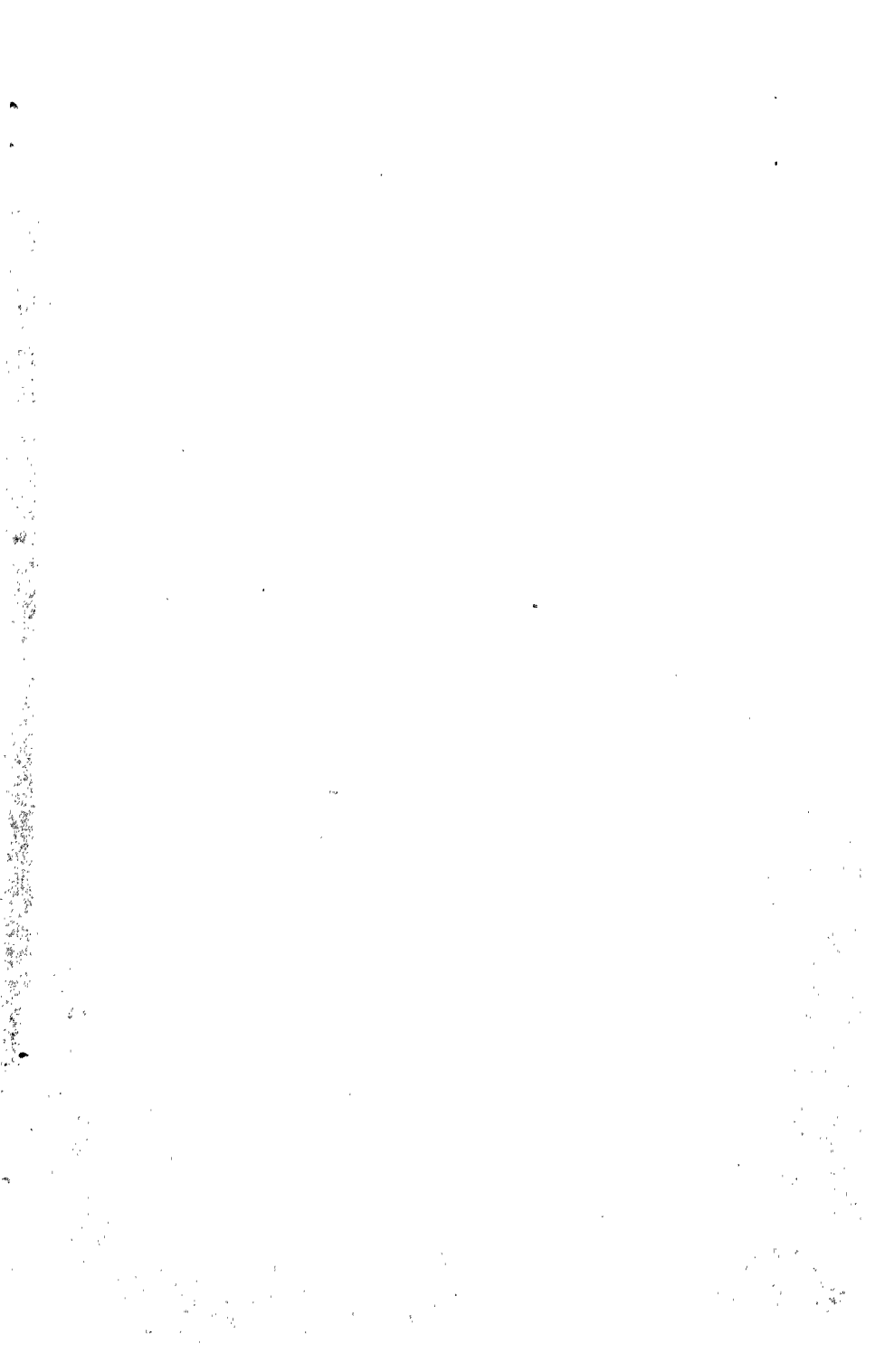
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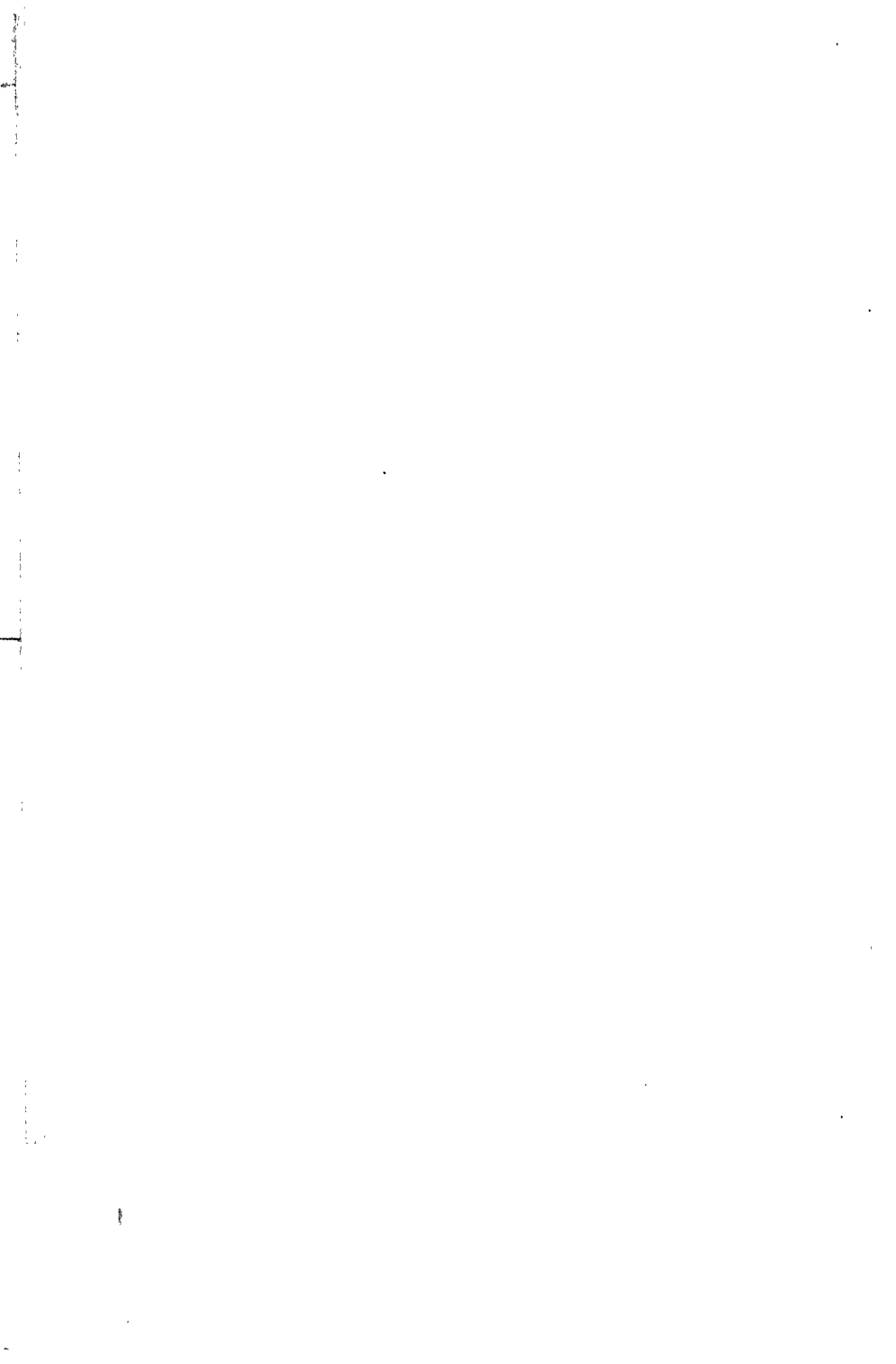
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AL FAKHRI



"Some discrepancies etc. in transliteration of names are due to the difficult circumstances in which the original manuscript was typed and, later, the printers' proofs corrected."

# AL FAKHRI

al Fakhri ; on the systems of government and the Moslem dynasties, composed by Muhammad son of 'Ali son of Tabataba, known as the rapid talker, may God have mercy on him.

*translated*

*By*

C. E. J. WHITTING

4550



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## PREFACE

No translation into English of al-Fakhri is known to me, except the short excerpts in Browne's *Literary History of Persia*, Volume I. Perhaps this is because of Amar's translation into French (Paris, 1910), of Derenbourg's edition of the Arabic text (Paris, 1895). But both Amar's translation and Derenbourg's text are now rare and expensive. So a complete translation into English from the Arabic may serve to accompany the cheaper reprints of the text now in common use, such as the Cairo edition of 1921. This translation has been made from Derenbourg's and the Cairo 1921 editions of the text, omitting,—for reasons of economy,—the index, for which, as for further biographical and bibliographical details, the reader is referred to the works cited above. English and Arabic are so different that it is often difficult to avoid a translation either so free that it scarcely represents the original, or so literal that the effect in English is unpleasant. My endeavour has been to produce one readable in English, but sufficiently close to be of use to the student and to permit comparison with the original. This has involved retention of some usages foreign to us. Any unusually free translations are put in single inverted commas; similarly, inserted explanatory words are shown in brackets. These have been kept to a minimum, even at the cost of renderings which may seem clumsy in English, but I hope that professional Arabists, who know the difficulties, will be lenient to this product of the scanty leisure of an amateur far from works of reference. Formal salutations have been omitted after the introduction, i.e., from page 14 onwards. Free use has been made of pronouns in English to avoid nominal repetitions in the Arabic. To avoid unnecessary repetition lengthy repeated genealogies have

been shown by 'etc.' Consistency in translating Ibn and Abu has not been achieved. I have tried to use the English version when the relationship seems emphasised, to keep the Arabic when merely nominal. The Arabic form of foreign names has been retained in transliteration, e.g., Hulaku. For Arabic words long since adopted into English, such as Caliph or Koran, their English form has been preferred. An elementary general knowledge on the part of the reader of Islam and Moslem history is assumed. For ready reference the essential biographical data of the author follow.

Safi ad-din Muhammad, known as Ibn at-Tiqtaqa (rapid speaker), was a Sharif, eighteenth in descent from the fourth Caliph, and son of a tax collector in Iraq, killed by 'Ata Malik in 1281. Ibn at-Tiqtaqa himself, born in 1261, supported the Mongols as being less anti-'Alid than the 'Abbasids. On a journey to Tabriz in the winter of 1301, detained by snow at Mosul, he composed this book, during the period February to June, 1302, in honour of its prince, -Fakhr' ad-din Isa son of Ibrahim,—in gratitude for hospitality and library facilities. The date of the author's death is unknown.

My thanks are due to Mr. G. H. Harry of the Nigerian Clerical Service for typing my MSS. in his leisure time.

C. E. J. WHITTING.

Kano Kaduna

1944-1945.

## CONTENTS

	<i>Page</i>
FIRST SECTION	
CONCERNING STATECRAFT AND GOVERNMENT -	14
SECOND SECTION	
DEALING WITH DYNASTY BY DYNASTY - -	69



## AL FAKHRI

Derenbourg p 8

Cairo text p (1)

**I**N the Name of God, the Merciful, the Pitiful, and my (hope of) aid is only in Him. Praise to God, the Causer of causes, the Opener of doors, the Determiner of affairs, the Arranger of seasons, the necessarily Existing, the Creator of characters and generosity, the Overflowing with wisdom, the Giver of all ; I confess that He is the Ruler of the creation, possessing it for His greatness. I bear witness that He is the Creator and that the unseen is not veiled to His wisdom ; and I take refuge in the glory of His might from the shame of the veil, and in the excess of His generosity from a strict accounting, and in the mystery of His wisdom from the punishments (detailed) in the Book. I pray for the illustrious souls clean from impurities, and for the terrestrial bodies free from filth. I single out from their midst, with the best of pious prayers and the most perfect of increasing greetings, him who called,—and tongues were sharp,—and guided right,—and necks were stiff<sup>1</sup> and hearts hard,—Muhammad the illiterate<sup>2</sup> Prophet, possessed of divine help, and the support of the Highest, also his excellent family, and pious companions, who believed in him when sent, and helped him when deserted, so long as a generous man bestows and a steel strikes fire. Next, the best to which the most distinguished kings have paid attention and most carefully pursued,—after attending to the rule of their people and setting in order that entrusted to them by sure title,—is attention to studies and the reading of books produced by noble intellects. As for the excellence of knowledge, it is as apparent as the appearance of the sun, stripped of doubt or uncertainty. Amongst apposite passages in the revelation, are the words of the Most High, "Are those who know and those who know not equal?" And

<sup>1</sup> Lit. : 'livers were rough.'

<sup>2</sup> Usually so rendered, but "Gentile" probably more correct.



amongst apposite passages in the traditions,—the blessings and peace of God be on him to whom they are attributed,—

“The angels lower their wings to the seeker of knowledge.”

As for the excellence of books, they have said, “Books are companions who do not deceive, nor tire, nor blame you when you deal hardly with them, nor reveal your secret. Muhallab said to his son, “My dear son, when you stop in the market, stop only at the sellers of weapons or of books.” Fath, son of Khaqan, who was sitting in the

- (2) presence of the Caliph Mutawakkil, and wished to rise to (perform the ritual) ablutions, drew from the leg of his boot a thin volume and kept studying it whilst going and returning. When he came into the presence of the Caliph, he returned it to the leg of his boot. A certain Caliph sent for a certain scholar to chat with him, and when the servant came he found him sitting with books all round him which he was studying. He said to him, “The Commander of the faithful calls you,” and he replied, “Tell him some learned men are with me, and I am conversing with them.  
 5 When I have finished with them, I will come.” When the servant returned to the Caliph and told him that, he said to him, “You wretch, who are these learned men who are with him?” He replied, “In truth, Commander of the faithful, there is no one with him.” He said, “Then fetch him at once, however he is.” When that scholar came, the Caliph said to him, “Who were those learned men with you?” He replied, “Commander of the faithful,

“We have companions of whose talk we do not tire, trusty and trusted, whether absent or here to see, They enrich us from their knowledge with knowledge of the past, counsel, education, honour and dignity ; If you say they are dead you are not wrong, and if you say they are alive you do not lie.”

The Caliph knew by that he was referring to books, and did not mind his lateness. Jahiz said, “I visited Muhammad, son of Ishaq, governor of Baghdad, during his tenure of office. He was sitting in his hall, with people standing

before him as still as if birds (were perched) on their heads. Then I visited him after a while, when he was alone, sitting in his library with books, notebooks, inkpots and 'writing materials'<sup>1</sup> all round him, and I never saw him more imposing than in that state." Mutanabbi said,

"The noblest place in the world is the saddle of a swift horse, and the best temporal companion is a book."

- 6 Knowledge adorns kings more than it adorns the people, and when the king is learned, the learned man becomes king. The most useful studies to a king are those which include the principles of government, and historical biographies comprising remarkable stories and wonderful records of the past, though ministers of old used to dislike kings studying biography and history, from fear that the kings would understand matters which the ministers did not want them to understand. Muktafi asked his minister for a book by reading which he might amuse himself and pass his time. The minister ordered one of his deputies to produce that book and to show it to him before taking it to the Caliph. They brought him some historical books containing accounts of past happenings,—battles of kings, anecdotes of ministers, and knowledge of artifices by which to extract wealth. When the minister saw them he said to
- (3) his deputies, "Truly you are my worst enemies. I told you to bring me books for his amusement and to divert his attention from me or another like me. But you have brought him that which will teach him the means of overthrowing ministers, show him the way to extract wealth, and teach him (the difference between) ruined and prosperous country. Return them and bring him books containing stories to amuse him, and poetry to delight him. They used to dislike, too, in Caliphs or kings, intelligence and knowledge of affairs. When Muktafi died, his minister intended to proclaim Abd'allah, son of al Mu'tazz. Abd'allah was a man of parts, intelligent, keen to learn. One of the clever scribes took him aside and said to him,
- 7 "This idea, Minister, which you have proposed, of

<sup>1</sup> Literally "transfers for ruling papers."

proclaiming the son of al Mu'tazz, is wrong." The minister replied, "Why is that?" and he said, "Why do you wish to seat on the Caliph's throne one who understands measures of length and weight, and prices; who understands affairs; who knows the difference between bad and good; who knows your house, your garden and your estate? The (better) idea is to enthrone a young child, so that the title of Caliph is his, but its reality yours. You will train him till he grows up, and when he is grown up, he will realise the debt owed to the training, and you will have accomplished your objects while he was young." The minister thanked him for that, and abandoned Abd'allah son of al Mu'tazz for Muqtadir, who was then thirteen. In the private parties of Badr' addin Lu'lu' the late prince of Mosul, the commonest topics were quotations of pleasing poetry and amusing stories. But when the month of Ramadan began, books of history and biography were brought to him, and Zain' (ad din) the scribe, and Izz' ad din the traditionalist sat with him reading 'World History.' This statement leads me on to explain how, when the decree of fate halted me at Mosul the humpbacked, I stopped there without being exposed to its downpours or its showers,<sup>1</sup> and I entered it,—as He has said, glory be to the speaker, "and he entered the city when its inhabitants paid no attention"—I proposed to remain there while the cold spell broke, and clothes were heavy, then to proceed  
 8 to Tabriz. Whilst I stayed at Mosul, from a number of different directions, and from sensible men independently, I heard of the abundant excellence of its most noble prince,—the obeyed master, the mighty king, the best and greatest of kings, the most noble and merciful of judges,—Fakr' al-millah wa'd-din, endowed with characteristics such that, if time had them, no free man would complain of its vicissitudes, nor would its harm touch any one; if the sea had them, its water would not be salt nor bitter, nor would the traveller on it fear its waves; if the months had them, the last day of the month would never come;—Isa, who revived dead virtues and spread open the roll of generous

<sup>1</sup> i.e., involuntarily.

(4) actions, who set up a good market for noble works when their value was low, who elevated the pedestals of good deeds of which the bases were formerly too weak to support their weight, who protected free men when they were less than nought, and who filled their hands with gifts through a generosity distinctive as the blaze or 'stockings' on a horse. He has covered them with the shade of an irremovable bounty and has lowered to them the wing of his mercy. He weakens not in well-doing to them nor in generosity. With every increase in his power and authority, he increases his humility and gentleness, and wherever he has reached the extremity of power, he has raised his standard for (the doing of) generous deeds ; son of Ibrahim, may God enoble his victory and execute his nay or yea, he who has eclipsed the memory of the generous, the constancy of the mountains, and the bravery of lions ;

“ In him the attributes of the sun, the winds, the clouds, and the lions.”

—who is on the forehead of this age a blaze, in its necklace a pearl, which no worldly pearl approaches ; who has confirmed the stories of the men of old, and proved what has been written of the noble deeds of the ancients. Ibn Rumi has said :—

“ Methinks the age was always thus, and that the tales of generosity lacked root,  
Grant that the generous men were as is told, had none of them posterity ? ”

If he had known him, he would have confirmed the stories he heard of generous folk, and attacks of doubt would not have shaken his sides. The arbiter, to whom, when he puts his noble intelligence and fine thoughts in charge of worldly issues and affairs of state, difficulties yield, hard rocks soften, hidden things appear, and it cannot be said that “ in the corner are secrets.” The power of justice with him is entire, and its bases established. If awe of him constrains you to fear, behind it are compassion for the weak, pity for the poor, and for the broken.

“His are habits of fair pardon which bind the free and free the bound.”

I once attended his august reception. It was a rainy day, and he ordered the door to be shut. But when the rain became heavy, he said to the chamberlains, “If anyone comes to the door with a request, inform us of it.” Then he said, “No one would come at a time like this, save through necessity, and it is not right that he should be sent away without hope.” In truth, should this book, meant to include noble actions of the past, contain other than this sort of anecdote? As for his statecraft, it is great, unspoil't by injustice. Let not his clemency and charm deceive you, for behind these is a courage before which lions quail, and an energy feared by the governing and  
(5) governed.

“He is the sea; dive therein when it is still, but beware it well when afoam.”

As for the power of his intellect, and his vigilance, in these respects he is as 'Mutanabbi has said:

“In his eye you recognise his real nature, as though it were ‘made up’ with intellect,

When his thoughts light up, they make me anxious for him, I fear lest he catch fire.”

As for the power of his instinctive reason, and sound discrimination, I think that the wisest of the kings of old, if they had lived and seen him, would surely have learnt from him how to govern the commons, and how to administer affairs. As for the extent of his generosity, it goes far beyond all limits,—call it a sea without exaggeration. If the proverbially generous men, those who lacked rivals or peers, had lived, they would surely have learnt from him the secrets of generosity, and copied from him  
11 excellencies of character. If I were to do justice, I would leave the description of this strong point of his, unable to encompass it by description, incompetent to arrange it as befits. But I say, according to (my) power and ability, that he despises this world as do the saints, holds it of as small account as do the ascetics. Of so small account

does he hold it that, were he to give away the world and add as much again, he would think himself a niggard. He gives gifts (in the style of him) who perpetuates renown and gives it new life. He expends wealth and annihilates it. Of him,

“Fault finder, generosity will not destroy me, nor will hateful meanness give eternal life,  
The character of a true man will be remembered,  
when his bones are hidden in the earth, their rottenness falling into dust.”

His ambitions touch the skies, and pass the Heavenly Twins, and hence he obtains familiarity with astronomy. He acquires knowledge of them by mounting to them and proximity, not by calculations and the astrolabe. He has reached the highest heavens, and their stars have communicated to him their secrets. He knocked the celestial spheres, the East and West of which told him their stories.

“His are ambitions the greatness of which lacks limits,  
his least ambition is greater than the age.”

The precious things of his wealth find no home in his treasures, no room holds them fast save the rooms<sup>1</sup> of those who seek his favours.

12 “As for us, when coins collect, they race off on the tracks of ambition,

The engraved coin knows not well our purse, but passes through it and then is off.”

(6) Drunkenness has nought to do with his generosity, except that sobriety (adds to) the downpouring rains (of his benevolence).

“The presents of his drunkenness he gives again when sober, that it may be known his generosity is of set purpose,

And he is safe in well doing from the jiber's jibe, 'He was generous' when the daughter of the vine fermented him'.”

<sup>1</sup> Play on words. The double meaning of “bait” cannot be reproduced in English.

<sup>2</sup> Play on words from root KRM cannot be rendered in English.

One of the secrets of his generosity, though it be more than much, is that he is free from extravagance, because it is directed to the best objects, and it falls on the most fertile soil. When someone approaches in hope, or a beggar comes, he hastens to his rescue as a torrent hastens down its bed.

“He was in love with noble deeds, mad for the renown they bring ; few are the lovers of noble deeds : He set up a market for praise, when the market of praise was not accounted a market.

Mention his kindnesses,—they are not kindnesses but necklaces ;

Kiss his finger tips,—they are not finger tips, but the keys of prosperity.”

13 Methinks, reader of this book, you have suspected exaggeration in what you have heard, but, if doubt assails you, look at the leaders of this age,—you will find them disputing over an atom, but you will find him careless even of a pearl.<sup>1</sup> You will find them keen to fill treasuries, but you will find him only keen for the glory that travels and the repute that flies. You will find them enamoured of children, but you will find him enamoured of those who ask and seek. You will find them fugitives from obligations<sup>1</sup> ; but you will find him accounting these the best of gains. Then look again,—you will find eulogies with them have a poor sale, with him you will find they have a ready market ; consider,—noble deeds in their case are seen to be frozen, while in him they are seen freely flowing. Look at his door,—you will find it peopled by bringers of praise, choked with men of letters, poets, the gifted and the eloquent.

“Birds alight where they pick up grain and the inn of generosity is crowded.”

In truth, there is no world save his world, and no life save his life which God has granted him.

<sup>1</sup> Plays on words from roots DRR and GHRM cannot be rendered in English.

" It is not life for a man to sleep replete, fleshed up like  
a butcher's joint,

Keen to drink wine, preoccupied with 'lovelies,'

Life is that a man distresses his enemies and cherish  
his 'friend',

Till are centred on him fears and hopes, and his  
estate and style are observed.

(7) His endeavours should be directed either to learning  
or to rule."

14 We return to our matter, and to the finish of our subject.  
The fates contrived that mention of me was made to him,  
and that something of my affairs was brought to his notice.  
Before we met, with his keen mind, and sound sense,  
he perceived my true state from this information, and he  
summoned me to pay him my respects. When I waited  
(on him) what I saw of his perfect aspect frightened me,  
and what I perceived of his physical beauty and the nobility  
of his conduct astonished me. My first quotation to him  
was from Mutanabbi :

" Till desire brought me to him his fame travelled  
with me unceasingly on each stage of the journey;  
Before meeting him, I thought the reports exaggerated,  
but when we met the truth dwarfed the report."

Then he showed continued kindnesses which implanted  
love of him (in my heart), and he reaped therefrom thanks  
and praise. I thought that I might serve his majesty by  
composing this book, to be a manual for him, and a  
reminder of me to him that he might remember me when  
absent from his august presence, and departed from his  
broad domains. In this book I have spoken of the cir-  
cumstances of dynasties and affairs of state. I have  
mentioned in it matters of interest I have found in the  
15 affairs of eminent rulers, and curiosities<sup>1</sup> from the biogra-  
phies of caliphs and ministers. I have arranged it in two  
sections. In the first, I have spoken of statecraft and  
government, the special characteristics of a ruler which  
differentiate him from the commons, and which should be

<sup>1</sup> Reading, with A, istaghbratuhu for istaqraituhu.



found present or absent in him ; his obligations to his subjects and theirs to him. I have embellished my account with verses from the Koran, traditions of the Prophets, interesting anecdotes, and pleasing verses. In the second section I have dealt, dynasty by dynasty, with the famous dynasties of which the authority was generally recognised, and which reached perfection. In it I begin with the rule of the four,—Abu Bakr, 'Umar, 'Uthman and 'Ali,—may God have mercy on them,—in the order of their succession ; Then the dynasty to which power passed from them, i.e., the Umayyad dynasty ; then of the dynasty to which power passed from the latter, i.e., the 'Abbasid dynasty ; then of those dynasties which existed in the time of the great dynasties, such as the dynasty of the Buwayyids, the dynasty of the Saljuqids, and the dynasty of the Fatimids in Egypt,—briefly, for these were dynasties which existed in the time of the 'Abbasids, but their authority was not generally recognised. I deal with them dynasty by dynasty, summarising my conclusions in regard to general outline, derived from

16 study of biographies and histories. I mention the manner of their beginnings and of their ends, amusing and useful (anecdotes) of the good qualities of their kings, and stories of their rulers. If any circumstances concerning them, which I needed to verify, escaped my recollection,—a pleasing anecdote, a remarkable verse of poetry, a (Koranic)

(8) text, or a tradition of the Prophet, I took them from the best authorities. Next, after mentioning the dynasties in turn, I have dealt with the outline of their affairs, then I have mentioned, one by one, their kings and the notable events of their times. The period of that ruler completed, I have enumerated his ministers, one by one, with anecdotes concerning them. When the period of the ruler and his ministers has been completed, I start the ruler after him, the events of his time, the biographies of his ministers, and so on to the end of the 'Abbasid dynasty. In it I have imposed on myself two rules, the first of them that I deviate not from the truth, that I speak only justly, that I avoid the tyranny of prejudice, and that I emerge

from the influence of environment and education, and suppose myself a stranger to them and a foreigner amongst them ; the second of them that I express my ideas clearly approaching the intelligencies (of my readers) in such wise that all may use them, avoiding the difficult expressions to which display of oratory and demonstration of eloquence

<sup>17</sup> lead. I have often seen authors tainted by a wish to display oratory and eloquence, with the result that their objects are obscured, and their meanings become impenetrable, so that the utility of their compositions is small. Among these is Abu 'Ali Husain son of Sina of Bukhara's "*Canon of Medicine*." He has stuffed it full of obscure expressions and incomprehensible constructions. Thus his purpose of making a useful book fails, and, as a result, you see most doctors have abandoned his book in favour of "*al Malaki*," —(in which) the expressions are easy and the allusions understandable. This book (of mine) will be indispensable to the statesman and to the administrator. If people do it justice, they will make their children learn it by heart, and ponder its ideas, after they themselves have pondered them. It is equally indispensable to the young and the old, to the ruler generally recognised and the ruler of a single town ; it is as indispensable to scholars as to rulers, for he who sets himself to be the confidant, companion and familiar of rulers needs more than this book, at least he should not pass it by. This book, if justly regarded, will be thought more useful than the "*Hamasa*," of which people are so fond, and which they make their children learn by heart. The only advantage obtainable from the "*Hamasa*" is the inculcation of bravery and hospitality, a few traits of character mentioned in the chapter on "Manners," and familiarity with types of poetry. But the advantages to be gained from this book comprise, in

<sup>18</sup> addition to the points mentioned above, the fundamentals of statecraft and the apparatus of government.

But this book contains things not in the "*Hamasa*," and the "*Hamasa*" does not contain things in it. It strengthens the intelligence, sharpens the wit, enlightens the perception, and is to the keen spirit as a good flint

to the steel. It is also more useful than the *Maqamat*, in which people have (such) faith, and which they like to learn by heart, because the only advantages to be gained from the *Maqamat* are practice in composition, and study<sup>(9)</sup> of the styles of verse and prose. True, it contains saws, dodges and empiricisms, but those only of a kind to lower the character, since they are based on dunning, begging, and improper trickery to obtain mean trifles, so, if it is useful in one way it is harmful in another. Some people have realised this about the *Maqamats* of Hariri and Badi' (az Zaman). Some turn to the *Highway of Eloquence* (composed) from the talk of the Commander of the faithful, 'Ali, son of Abu Talib. It, indeed, is a book whence may be learnt saws, moral advice, sermons, 'theology,' bravery, continence, and high ideals. The least of its merits are clarity and eloquence. People turn, too, to al 'Utbi's *al Yamini*. This book was composed by its author in honour of Yamin 'ad Daula Mahmud, son of Subutakin. It includes biographies of a number of kings of eastern countries, and he expresses himself therein in a felicitous and extremely eloquent style. If not a wizard, the author is (at least) a skilled writer. The Persians are devoted to it, and seek it zealously. In truth, it is a book which includes amusing saws and original biographies, together with the (different) branches of eloquence and kinds of elegant style which it contains. Perchance someone will say "He has exaggerated in describing his book, and has stuffed his wallet with wishful thinking." A man is tempted (to do this) over his son or his poetry. But, if doubt assails him, let him consider the books composed on this subject, then perhaps he will not see among them any book better implementing the idea which was the object of the author of this book. As for him<sup>1</sup> may God ennoble his victory, and hearten his heart<sup>2</sup> with enduring happiness. By (giving him) an overpowering intelligence and manifest superiority, God has made it unnecessary for him to have recourse to this book or its like. But

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the ruler of Mosul.

<sup>2</sup> Trying to reproduce the play on words derived from root SRR.

his noble purposes may often tire him and make him forgetful, then he may refresh his noble mind by glancing at it, by it repel weariness, and by it recollect whatever business has made him forget. From the favours of God Most High I beg that this book may not lack two advantages,—the first of them concerns me in particular, that it should meet with his approval, that I may be free from liability to shame ; the other concerns him in particular, that He may not deprive him of profiting therefrom in word and deed, for He is the possessor of every favour and the granter of every benefit.

## FIRST SECTION

### CONCERNING STATECRAFT AND GOVERNMENT

**S**PEAKING of the origin of power, its essential nature and its division into religious and temporal leadership (as seen in) the caliphate, the sultanate, the amirate, the governorate and the like,—whether sanctioned by the divine law or not,—and the systems of the “jurists” concerning the imamate, this book is not the place for enquiry into these. It has been composed only to deal with systems of government and conventions useful in

(10) current affairs and in conflicts which occur, in the rule of subjects, the safety of the realm, and improvement of manners and conduct. The first thing to be said is that the best ruler is he who combines in himself certain qualities and lacks certain qualities. As for the qualities preferably found in him,—amongst them is intelligence. That is the root of them (all), and the most important. On it are built empires, even faiths, and this description is enough. Amongst them is justice, from which wealth becomes abundant, provinces prosperous, and men improved.

12 When the emperor Hulaku conquered Baghdad in A.H. 656, he ordered that a ruling be obtained from the doctors of law as to whether a just infidel emperor were better or a believing unjust emperor. Then the doctors assembled for this purpose in the Mustansiriyyah, but when they had considered the ruling, they hesitated to reply. Radi 'ad Din 'Ali, son of Tawus, was present at this meeting. He was senior and respected. When he saw their reluctance, he took the ruling and signed it, as preferring the just infidel to the unjust believer. The others signed after him. Amongst them, too, is knowledge, which is the fruit of intelligence, and by which a ruler sees clearly at what to aim, what to avoid, and by

which he escapes errors in his judgments and decisions. By it a ruler is adorned in the sight of both small and great, and through it he becomes numbered amongst eminent rulers. A certain wise man said, "A ruler lacking knowledge is like an elephant on heat, which passes by nothing without knocking it down. He has not intelligence to warn him nor knowledge to restrain him." Understand that desirable knowledge in rulers is not that they should perpend difficult problems, nor go too deeply into obscure studies, nor too far in their pursuit. Mu'awiyah said, "It is bad for a ruler to go to extremes in acquiring a single study. Desirable knowledge in a ruler is that he should only have enough familiarity with them (i.e., studies), to enable him to converse with experts in them about them so that, by their means, present difficulties may be solved. There is no need for that to go

22 into detail. Mu'ayyad ad Din, son of al 'Alqami, Minister of Must'asim, the last minister of the 'Abbasid dynasty, used to converse with every scholar who visited him, in a wise, intelligent and instructed manner. He had no grasp of studies, nor had he had long training in them. Badr 'ad Din Lu'lu', prince of Mosul, through numerous sessions with men of parts, and his deep conversations on poetry and anecdotes, discovered good ideas and realised the nicest points, though he was an illiterate who could neither read nor write. The late 'Izz 'ad Din 'Abd 'al 'Aziz son of Ja'far of Nisapur through his sessions with men of parts and much intercourse with them came to realise good ideas, and used to solve difficult riddles more quickly  
(11) than they. He possessed no knowledge, yet it seemed to people that he was a man of parts. This was even hidden to the Secretary of State 'Ala ad Din. The son of Kabush, the Basrah poet, made two verses on the Secretary, and attributed them to 'Abd 'al 'Aziz. They were :

" 'Ata Malik, your gifts (equal) the realm of Egypt and one of the slaves of your dynasty is 'Aziz ;

You recompense every sinner with pardon and it is such as you who recompense or forgive."

28 'Abd 'al 'Aziz recited them in the presence of the Secretary, pretending they were his own, and the matter was hidden from the Secretary. I do not know which of the two (things) is more remarkable, that the true condition of 'Abd 'al 'Aziz remained hidden from the Secretary despite his long years of association with him abroad and at home, at work and in play, or that 'Abd 'al 'Aziz liked a sorry trick of this kind, made so bold with the secretary, and did not fear that the secretary would realise and hold him in low esteem for what he had done. The studies of rulers differ according to their different points of view. The studies of the rulers of Persia were saws, moral precepts, literature, history, geometry and the like. The studies of the rulers of Islam were philology, grammar, lexicography, poetry and history, so much so that an error in speech was one of the most objectionable faults in the royal dignity,<sup>1</sup> and a man's rank might be advanced with them by a single anecdote, a single verse of poetry,—nay, a single idiomatic word. As for the Mongols, all those studies were rejected, and other studies were popular with them,—economics, accountancy, for “balancing the budget” and the estimates of revenue and expenditure, medicine to keep bodies and constitutions (in health), and astrology to choose occasions. Studies other than those and literature were unpopular with them, and I have not seen them popular except in Mosul in the time of its ruler mentioned above, May God extend his shade and publish his excellence. Amongst them is fear of God Most High. This quality is the root of all good, and the key to every blessing. When the king fears God, the servants of God trust him. It is related that 'Ali, Commander of the faithful, called with his own voice one of his slaves, who did not answer him. Then he called him many times, but he did not answer him. A man went in to him and said, “Commander of the faithful, he is standing at the door ; he hears your voice and does not answer you.” When the slave came to him he said, “Did you hear my voice ?” He said, “Yes.” He said, “Then

<sup>1</sup> So the text. Amar prefers to read 'malik',—“in a ruler.”

what stopped you answering me," He said, "I felt safe from your punishment." 'Ali said, "Thanks be to God, who created me one of those from whom His creation feels safe." Well said Abu Nuwas to Harun arRashid :

"I did fear you, then your fear of God saved me from fear of you."

- (12) ar Rashid did not fear God. His treatment of the chief members of 'Ali's family, who were the children of his Prophet's daughter, shows his lack of fear of God Most High, but Abu Nuwas in what he said followed the habit of poets. Amongst them is pardon of faults, and excellent clemency for errors. This is the most important of the good qualities. By it are hearts won over, and sentiments improved. A relevant quotation from the Revelation, is the saying of God Most High. "Pardon and forgive. Do you not wish God to forgive you?" Ma'mun was patient, excellently clement, noted for it. Di'bil the poet satirised him in numerous verses, amongst them :

"I am one of those whose swords killed your brother and gave you the honour of the throne ;

They made you known after long obscurity, and rescued you from the lowest of low places."

When this saying reached him, he only said, "'Curse' him, how he lies ! When was I obscure ? I was brought up in the lap of the Caliphate, and suckled in its milk." When it reached him that Di'bil had satirised him he said, "How will one who has dared to satirise my minister Abu 'Abbad not dare to satirise me ?" On the surface this saying is incorrect and requires explanation, being the reverse of the normal. It should have been the minister saying, "How will one who has dared to satirise the Caliph not dare to satirise me ?" The meaning of Ma'mun's saying was, "how would anyone who dared to satirise Abu 'Abbad, despite his choler, violence and impatience,—for such was Abu 'Abbad,—not dare (to do so) to me, considering my patience and forgiveness ?"

- 26 Were it not for fear of prolixity, I would here mention a number of patient kings, but this section is not the place



for discursiveness. Please God, enough on this will come in the second section. Amongst them, some hold that hate is a praiseworthy quality in a ruler. Buzurjmihru said, "A ruler should hate more than a camel." I disagree with this statement, and say, "How could he say this, seeing that when a ruler hates, his sentiments to his subjects are bad, he dislikes them, and has less interest in them and pity for them. When they perceive that, their sentiments to him change, and their inward (feelings) become evil. How can a ruler attain his desire in major affairs of state, and achieve his intended objects, save through the 'willing co-operation' of his subjects? What wisdom is there in that? Is there aught in it save embitterment of the ruler's life, the exacerbating of his subjects against him, and the estrangement of them from him? An Arab poet said :

"I will not bear my old hate against them ; a leader  
of the people should not bear hate."

(18) In particular, men are composed of error, naturally swift  
27 to indulge their appetites. How many causes for hate  
do they furnish ! All his life the ruler would not be free from the encumbrance of anger and hate against them which would embitter his pleasures, and divert him from many important affairs of state. How often have we seen subjects, or the army attack their rulers and divest them of the cloak of the realm, nay even of the cloak of life ? Start with 'Umar son of al Khattab, whom Abu Lulu'ah, a slave of Mughirah son of Shu'bah, attacked and killed. Take second 'Uthman son of 'Affan. Look how his subjects collected against him from all sides, and besieged him in his home for days, then broke in on him and killed him, with the Book in his lap, so that the drops of his blood dripped on the Book. Take third 'Ali son of Abu Talib, —God's blessing be on him,—whom 'Abd 'ar-Rahman son of Huljam struck with a sword on the top of his head at Kufah and killed. The son of Muljam was a 'dissenter.' (All) this was in the early period, when men were (still true) men and religion (still true) religion. Then take in

turn dynasty after dynasty, and period after period to the middle of the 'Abbasid dynasty. Look from the reign of Mutawakkil to the reign of Muqtafi what has happened to one Caliph after another,—murder, deposition, robbery,—through the changed sentiments of his army and subjects.

- 28 This one was blinded, that one killed, another deposed. Then direct your glance to the two dynasties of the Buwayhids and the Saljuqids,—you will see in this chapter astonishing (things). Next turn your eyes back to Unkkhan, ruler of the Turks,—how, when his sentiments towards Jinkizkhan changed, and he hated him on account of matters brought to his notice by those who envied him, he wished to destroy him. Two pages informed him (i.e., Jinkiz) of this so that he set out that very night. Then he mustered and collected (troops), attacked Unkkhan, killed him, and became master of his kingdoms. Know that hate is one of the most harmful things in a ruler and that the most proper things in him are pardon, clemency, forgiveness and forgetfulness. Excellent is the saying of him who said :

“ Take from men the easy and leave the difficult,  
For men are glass which breaks if not handled with  
care.”

A poet praised hate, and none has been heard to praise it save he. He said :

“ Hate in a true man is but gratitude's twin, one characteristic is related to another.

Where you see hate to the evil doer, there you will see gratitude for the past boon.

If the earth pays back a crop from the seed you sowed in her, that is all you should expect from the earth.”

- 29 This saying does not merit attention, and if anyone does attend to it, then it should be some other than a ruler  
(14) who does so, for, of all created beings, a ruler has most need to improve sentiments and conciliate feelings. Generosity is one of the qualities to be desired in a ruler. It is the basis of conciliating feelings, obtaining good advice from the world, and enlisting the services of notables

A poet has said :

“ When the ruler gives no presents, leave him, for his empire is departing.”

A relevant extract from the Traditions of the Prophet, “ Pardon the generous man a fault, for God takes him by the hand each time he stumbles, and opens to him (a way) when he is in straits.” ’Ali, said, “ Generosity is the guardian of reputations.” Know that biography contains no anecdotes of generosity such as those told of Qan al ’Adil Uktay, son of Jinkiz Khan, for he threw into the shade all generous rulers.

“ Good qualities which break through your patched up (stories of them) are the generosity of Ka’b and the hospitality of Hatim.”

A happy coincidence was that he lived in the time of Mustansir billah, who was more generous than the wind,  
 30 but where was his generosity compared to that of Qan, and whence could Mustansir obtain the wealth dispensed by Qan in gifts. Amongst them is respect, by means of which the order of the realm is safeguarded and protected from the ambitions of subjects. Rulers used to go to extremes to inspire respect and reverence, even to tying up lions, elephants and leopards ; sounding large bugles,—such as the bugle for battle,—kettledrums and cymbals ; hoisting standards ; arranging draperies over their heads,—all these to enforce respect in the hearts of subjects and to establish reverence in the realm. When ’Adud ’ad Daula sate on his throne, lions, elephants and leopards were brought before him in chains and placed along the sides of his audience hall, to frighten the people thereby and intimidate them. Amongst them is statecraft, which is the ruler’s capital, and which is trusted to spare bloodshed, guard property, protect morals, prevent disaster, restrain evil doers and trouble makers and to check the extortion which follows from civil war and unrest.  
 (15) Amongst them is fidelity to engagements. God has said, “ Fulfil engagements, for an engagement will a reckoning be required.” This is fundamental, to calm hearts, content minds, and give subjects confidence in the ruler

when one afraid seeks a safe conduct from him, or the maker of a treaty wishes to conclude one with him.

(15) Amongst them is study of obscure matters in the realm and the details of his subjects' affairs, and recompensing the doer of good according to the good done by him and the evil doer according to the evil done by him. King Ardashir used to say to whomsoever he wished of his subjects, great or small, "Yesterday such and such was your condition," so much so that they began to say, "An angel from Heaven comes to Ardashir to inform him of affairs." But this was only his vigilance and care. These ten qualities are the good qualities. The possessor of them deserves the highest power, and if 'legists and theologians' consider truly and abandon prejudice, these would be the prerequisites taken into consideration in assessing desert for the imamate. All else is useless. Buzurjmihir said, "A ruler should be as the earth in hiding his secrets and in his patience; like fire against ill doers; like water in gentleness to whomsoever deals gently with him. He should hear better than the horse, see better than the eagle, have a better sense of direction than the sandgrouse, be more on his guard than the crow, be bolder than the lion, stronger and quicker in attack than the lynx. A ruler should not rely on his independent opinion, but consult in difficult matters the distinguished and most sensible of the people, and whomsoever he may discern to be keen-witted, sensible, of generous outlook, sound discrimination and knowledge of affairs. The might of the royal power should not prevent him from intimacy with the man whom he consults, nor from friendliness with him, nor from winning his loyalty, so that the latter may sincerely advise him well, for no one advises well perforce. Good advice is only the product of (good) will. Well says the poet on this subject :

"I am despised and rejected, then they ask me for  
good advice,

And who gives his good advice perforce?"

God Most High has said, "Consult them on the matter."

The Prophet used to consult his companions always. At the time of the battle of Badr, he left Madinah with a company of the Moslems, and when they reached Badr they halted at a waterless place. One of his companions came to him and said, "Messenger of God, is your halt here a matter in which God has commanded you, or is it of your own accord?" He said, "Of my own accord." He said, "Messenger of God, the correct course is for you to march on and halt at water, so that water may be available to us and we not fear thirst. Also when the 'pagans' come they will not find water, and that will be a help to us against them." The Messenger of God said, "You are right," then ordered a march on and a halt <sup>33</sup> at water. The theologians disagree as to whether God Most High commanded His Messenger to seek advice despite the help and advice given to him by Him. On that there are four views. First, that he was ordered to consult the companions to win their loyalty and 'secure their willing co-operation.' Secondly, that he was ordered to consult them in war, so that the correct view might be confirmed for him, and he act accordingly. Thirdly, that he was ordered to consult them because of the useful <sup>(16)</sup> and advantageous (counsel) they possessed. Fourthly, that he was only ordered to consult them in order that people might copy him, and this, I hold, is the best view and the most correct. They say, "A 'miss' in consultation is better than a 'bull' scored alone and independently." The author of *Kalilah and Dimnah* said, "A ruler must have a trusty adviser to whom he can confide his secrets and who will assist him with his opinion. As for the asker of advice, even though he be superior to him consulted, cleverer, and of sounder views, (yet) the former gains in views by (adding) views, as fire gains in heat and light by (adding) oil." A poet said :

"When the thinker wants advice, consult the view of  
an honest adviser,  
Or the advice of a resolute man."

Know that a king has attributes peculiar to himself, which

distinguish him from the commons. Amongst them is the fact that, when he likes a thing, the people like it ; and when he dislikes a thing, the people dislike it ; and when he adores a thing, the people adore it, either naturally or so pretending thereby to curry favour with him. Hence the saying, "The people follow the faith of their rulers."

34 Consider the practice of people in the time of the Caliphs. When the present dynasty,—may God expand its well-doing and elevate its affairs,—obtained power, the people changed their manners in all matters and copied those of their rulers, in speech, clothes, apparatus, etiquette and conventions, without the latter compelling or ordering them to do these, or their forbidding those. But they knew that their previous manners were objectionable in their sight, opposite to their choice, and they sought their favour through their manners. In every age rulers have never preferred manners or fashions without the people inclining to them and becoming passionately fond of them. This is a peculiarity of royal power, and a secret of kingship. An attribute peculiar to a ruler is that association with him bequeaths pride, haughtiness, 'courage' and arrogance. Association with others than the ruler does not do this.

Another attribute peculiar to him is that when he shows aversion from a man that man becomes faint-hearted, even though undamaged by him, and when he approaches a man that man is encouraged, even though unbenefited by him. Plain aversion or approach achieves that, and only a ruler has this attribute. The son of Maqaffa' has mentioned the qualities preferably lacking in him in a treatise of his. He said, "The ruler should not be angry, because power backs his wish ; nor a liar, since no one can force him against his will : nor greedy, for he, least of men, has the excuse of fear of poverty ; nor a hater, for his rank is above requital of each person according to the harm emanating from him ; nor a swearer when he speaks, for a man is impelled to use oaths in his speech by some shortcoming or unworthiness he recognises in himself ; a necessity that people believe him ;

or some incapacity, impediment or weakness of speech, so that he wishes to take an oath as a complement to his speech or to fill it out ; or he has already realised that he is well known among the people for lying and has put himself in the position of one who is disbelieved and whose statement is rejected unless (backed) by an oath, in which case the more his oaths the more people give him the lie. A ruler should avoid all such humiliation ; his position should be above that." Among the qualities preferably absent in a ruler is impetuosity, which often induces in him an act of which he repents when repentance is useless. Usually you see a swift reaction in impetuous men, hence the Prophet said, " The best of my people are the impetuous." Among the qualities preferably absent in a ruler are disgust, weariness and ennui, which are the worst and most damaging things to his position. Know that his subjects owe duties to a ruler, and he duties to them. As for the duties owed to the ruler by his subjects, amongst them is obedience,—the basis on which is organised the public weal, and by which the ruler is enabled to do justice between the weak and the strong and to apportion fairly. Amongst the apposite passages in the revelation urging that is the famous verse on this subject, in which the Most High said, " Believers, obey God, obey the Messenger and those of you in authority." From their (Arab) proverbs,—“ There is no authority in the case of one who is not obeyed.” History does not record, nor biography contain mention of a dynasty enriched with as much military and civil obedience as this (present) victorious Mongol dynasty. Actually, the obedience both civil and military which it enjoys is ‘unique.’ The Kisra dynasty, despite its size and might did not attain this. Nu‘man son of Mundhir, ruler of Hirah, was a deputy for Kisra over the Arabs, and between Hirah and Madain, which was the Kisras’ capital, were only a ‘few miles,’ but Nu‘man was always rebelling against Kisra, and when he presented himself at his court, he behaved unceremoniously, and boldly answered him back. When he wished to revolt, he entered the desert

and was safe from harm by him. None of the Moslem dynasties are worthy of comparison with this (present) dynasty. The first four caliphs,—'Abu Bakr the Truthful, (37) 18 'Umar son of al Khattab, 'Uthman son of 'Affan, and 'Ali son of 'Abu Talib, in all things resembled rather a spiritual rather than a mundane 'authority.' The first of them used to wear clothes of coarse cloth, fibre sandals on his feet, a fibre baldric for his sword, and walked in the market like any subject. When he spoke to the meanest subject, the latter answered with rougher talk than his own. They used to account this part of the faith with which the Prophet was sent. It is said that 'Umar son of al Khattab received from Yaman lengths of cloth. He divided them amongst the Moslems, each of whom received one length as his share. 'Umar's share was that of one Moslem. 'Umar tailored it, wore it, and ascended the pulpit to give orders to the people on the Holy War. A Moslem came up to him and said, "We neither listen nor obey." "Why so?" he replied. He answered, "Because you have preferred yourself to us." 'Umar said, "In what way have I done so?" He replied, "When you divided the Yaman lengths of cloth, each Moslem received one, and so you too. But one length would not make you a garment; we see you have tailored it into a whole shirt, and you are a tall man, too. If you had not taken more you could not have made a shirt out of it." 'Umar turned to his son 'Abd 'allah, and said, "'Abd 'allah, reply to his talk." 'Abd 'allah 38 son of 'Umar stood up and said, "When the Commander of the faithful, 'Umar, wished to tailor his length of cloth, it was insufficient, and I gave him enough of my length to complete it for him." Then the man said, "Now we listen and obey." This conduct does not conform to that of temporal rulers but resembles rather the methods of prophets or the things of the next world. The authority of the Umayyad Caliphs became great and considerable, and their empire broad, but the obedience (rendered) to them was not like the obedience (rendered) to these. The Umayyads were in Damascus and the Hashimites



in Madinah were regardless of them. When a Hashimite met the Umayyad Caliph, he spoke to him rudely and with every kind of insult. The 'Abbasid empire did not attain command of popular obedience to the same extent as this dynasty, despite its duration for more than 500 years, and its empire extending so far that some of them taxed the greater part of the world. Reference will be made to this when dealing with the 'Abbasid dynasty. The revenue of the world in the days of Rashid was included in one general statement of account,—as witness (19) the histories. Their early (caliphs) such as Mansur, Mahdi, Rashid, Ma'mun, Mu'tasim,<sup>1</sup> and Mutawakkil, taxed the better part of the world, and their power grew strong, yet their dynasty was not free from weakness and feebleness in a number of ways, including the independence of Byzantium, and the annual outbreak of violent war between them and its Christian rulers, despite which its taxation was found difficult by them, and its rulers were always independent of them. You know the story of Mu'tasim and 'Ammuriya, and perhaps you will see a brief reference to this in the chapter on the 'Abbasid dynasty. One of the causes enfeebling their dynasty were the constant rebellions of the 'dissenters.' Mansur never 'knew a moment's peace' on this account. The Pure Soul, Muhammad son of 'Abd 'allah son of Hasan son of 'Ali son of Abu Talib, rebelled against him in the Hijaz. Clashes occurred between them resulting in the despatch of Isa, son of Musa son of Muhammad son of 'Ali son of 'Abd 'allah son of 'Abbas, to the Hijaz to fight the Pure Soul, and he killed him at a place near Madinah, called Ahjar 'az Zait. The Pure Soul's brother, Ibrahim, son of 'Abd 'allah, also rebelled against him in Basrah, at which Mansur was extremely alarmed and disturbed, till Isa son of Musa marched against him and killed him at a village near Basrah, called Bakhamra, so that he is known as the martyr of Bakhamra. Thenceforth Mansur hated the 'Alids, and treated them as he did. Perhaps you (40) will see a brief reference to this in this book when I came

<sup>1</sup> Omitting Mu'tadid, see note Amar, page 48.

to deal with the 'Abbasid dynasty. Such were the relations between the 'dissenters' and successive Caliphs till subjects could not sleep in security in their houses, and civil war and strife were unceasing, as happened in the case of the people of Qazwin, (situated) near one of the heretics' strongholds. The ruler Imam 'ad Din Yahya, son of al Iftakhri told me as follows : " I remember when we were in Qazwin, and night came, we put all our household utensils, clothes and baggage in deep hidden cellars we had in our houses. We left nothing above earth, fearing a sudden onset by the heretics. At dawn we brought out our things, and when night came we did the same thing again." Because of this the carrying of knives and arms by the men of Qazwin was common. The heretics continued in this wise till the time of Shams 'ad Din, judge of Qazwin, who went to Qan, fetched troops, and demolished all the heretics' strongholds.

(20) But here is not the place to treat of this in detail,—the reference was accidental, not deliberate. The like happened to Muwaffaq, son of Mutawakkil, in the Zinj conspiracy. For fourteen years he patiently protected Basrah and it was from then,—for this long time,—till he annihilated them. Owing to the length of time, the Zinj built cities there as, too, did Muwaffaq, which later fell into ruin, and their traces remain now. As for the later ones,—  
41 I mean the later 'Abbasid Caliphs,—they became so weak that Takrit disowned allegiance to them. On this one of their poets said :

" We were a company in the victorious army of a dynasty ; how wretched a troop were we !

Judge our thoughts from our plans, made in the wretchedness, stupidity, and rashness which you see.

Takrit was too much for us, yet, in thought, we advanced against Tirmidh in Sanjar."

They,—I mean the later 'Abbasid caliphs,—were limited at the end of their rule, to the Province of Iraq,—and no more—so much so that Irbil was not in their control, and continually revolted against them till the death of

Muzaffar 'ad Din, son of Zain 'ad Din 'Ali Kukhak, prince of Irbil, which occurred in the days of Mustansir, who appointed Sharaf 'ad Din Iqbal, the cupbearer, the Commander-in-chief, to march on Irbil and take it. He prepared an army for him and the Cupbearer marched against it, besieged it for several days, then took it. The "victory drums" were beaten in Baghdad on the day the carrier pigeon brought the news of its capture. Reflect on a dynasty (such that) the "victory drums" are beaten at the gates of its prince and the town beflagged for the capture of the fortress of Irbil, which to-day,—in (the time of) this dynasty,—is one of the most insignificant, smallest and despised territories.

No doubt the rulers of the Marches, such as those of Syria and Egypt, and the prince of Mosul used to transmit to them annually something by way of a present or to secure their good offices. They sought from them investiture in the government of their territories, thereby to rule absolutely over their subjects and by this means to impose on them obedience as a duty. Perhaps the Caliphs used to return to the rulers of the Marches in exchange for their presents the equivalent of these or even more in value,—all this to maintain outward prestige and that their name might appear in the Marches on the coinage and in the bidding prayer, till it became a proverb, and of one who had the appearance of power without any reality it was said, "So and so in such and such a matter is content with the coinage and bidding prayer," i.e., he was content with the name without the reality. This is a precis of the characteristics of the 'Abbasid dynasty. The empires of the two dynasties of the Buwayhids and Saljuqids, despite the powerful strength of their rulers,—such as 'Adud 'ad Daula of the former or Tughrulbak of the latter,—did not extend far, nor was recognition of their authority general, nor their rule inclusive. Neither did the empire of the dynasty of (the Shahs of) Kharizm,—though the parade state of the Sultan Jalal 'ad Din included 400,000 troops of the line,—extend far, nor go beyond the districts adjacent to itself, though Jalal 'ad Din raided

- 43 the marches of India. Among the duties incumbent on subjects in regard to the ruler are respect and recognition of his importance 'in action and in thought,' conditioning themselves to and practising themselves in this so that it becomes an established habit; training their children in the same and educating them in it so that this idea may grow up with them. Here is an appropriate story. Our 'ruling' Sultan,—may God strengthen the basis of his power, and spread the shade of his justice in the East and the West,—on coming to Baghdad in A.H. 698, entered the Mustansiriyyah to see it and visit it. Before his coming thereto it was embellished. The 'professors' sat on their 'chairs,' with the canon lawyers in front of them, in their hands copies of the Koran from which they were reading. It chanced that the Sultan's train started by passing the group belonging to the Shafi'i persuasion, whose 'professor' was Shaikh Jamal 'ad Din 'Abd 'allah, son of al 'Aquli, the principal Shafi'ite in Baghdad. When they saw him they rose. He said to the 'professor' mentioned above, "How are you allowed to rise to me and leave the word of God?" The 'professor' made an answer which did not meet with the approval of the Sultan,—may God exalt his word in this world and his rank in the next. Later the above-mentioned 'professor' told me the form of the question and the answer. The former I have already recounted, but his reply I do not recollect.
- 44 I said to him, "You ought to have replied to this question: 'It is not forbidden to us in our canon law to leave the sacred book when it is in our hands and to occupy ourselves with something else, nor is there wrong in our doing so, because this sacred book, which we left to rise to the Sultan, has commanded us to respect our rulers'"

Among the duties owed by subjects to the ruler is that of giving good advice. An apposite tradition of the Prophet is, "Religion is the giving of good advice." "In whose interest, Messenger of God?" it was said. He replied, "In the interest of God, His Messenger, and the congregation of the Moslems." Among them is avoidance of backbiting the ruler behind his back. The

Prophet said, "Speak not ill of rulers, for, if they do well, theirs is a reward and you owe (them) thanks; and, if they do ill, the burden of sin is theirs, and your duty is patience. They are the means of God's punishment by which He punishes whomsoever He will. Do not anticipate the punishment of God by hastiness and anger, (22) anticipate it by humility and supplication." The duties owed by the king to his subjects include the protection of the capital, the defence of the frontiers, the fortification of the marches, the safety of the roads, and the restraint of evil doers. These duties are as obligatory on the ruler as his compulsory religious duties, on account of which obedience to him is obligatory on his subjects. A similar argument was used against 'Ali, the Commander of the faithful, by the 'dissenters' after the finish of the campaign of Siffin. They said to him, "You have not performed your duty in guarding this frontier, i.e., that of Syria,—by your appointment of the two arbiters. You were wrong and did not perform your duty, so we do not owe you obedience. If you confess this fault and seek 45 forgiveness, we will return to our allegiance and fight the enemy with you." He informed them that, in the matter of the arbitration, his own view was overborne, and that the arbitration was not his counsel. But they persisted in what they said, did not accept (his explanation), left him and fought against him up to the famous engagement of Nahruwan. Pity for them is a duty owed by a ruler to his subjects, and patience when they commit faults. The Prophet said, "Pity in anything only beautifies it; hardness in anything only makes it ugly." Instances of pity are recorded of him which could only pertain to the prophetic office. Salah 'ad Din Yusuf, son of Ayyub, sovereign of Egypt and Syria, abounded in pity and was noted for it. Once, after a long illness, which had enfeebled him and wasted his strength, he went to the baths, and was put into the bath in a state of extreme weakness. He asked one of the slaves standing by him for hot water, and he brought him some extremely hot water in a bowl. When near him the slave's hand shook, the bowl fell on

him, and the water burnt his body. He did not punish him even by a single word. A short time after he asked him for some cold water, and he brought it to him in that bowl some extremely cold water. When near him his hand shook as on the previous occasion. The bowl of that extremely cold water fell on him so that he fainted and nearly died. When he recovered, he said to the slave, "If you want to kill me, tell me," and he said no more. It is related that a man with foul breath approached a high officer to consult him, and the latter said to the former, "Stand away from me for you disgust me." The former replied, "(May you enjoy) neither honour nor power! We only made you a high officer and rose to (salute) you in order that you might suffer from us far worse and be patient with us in matters far more important than this." Among the duties of a ruler to his subjects is restraining the stronger from (oppressing) the weaker; giving the lowly justice against the powerful, establishing (the rule of) law among them; maintaining their rights as they should be maintained; helping the

(23) dejected; answering any of them who cries for aid, and holding the scales of justice equal between the most distant of them and the nearest, the lowliest and the mightiest. 'Umar son of al Khattab said to a man, "I do not like you." The latter replied, "Have you done me any wrong?" 'Umar said, "No." The man then said, "Only women please themselves with likes beyond this." A ruler's duties include recognition of God's favour to him in preferring him to the rest of the creation for this high rank; in making every one afraid of him, and in making him not afraid of anyone. He should ever make mention of and be thankful for this,—the former in conformity with the Word of the Most High,

47 "As for the favour of your Lord, speak (thereof)"; the latter that he may seek more (of it), in conformity with the word of the Most High, "If you are thankful I will surely give you more." There should also be between him and his Lord a secret, unknown to all save God. That pact will protect (him) from the blows of evil. This

theory is accepted not only by the theologians but also by the learned, and it is possible to explain it in this sense according to the beliefs of them (both). He should, too, have prayers by which he holds intimate converse with his Lord, i.e., prayers particular to the ruler, inappropriate to the commons. (I see) no harm in here recording a piece of a royal prayer of my own composition, and I do not know of any one (else) who has given attention to this (point). An abridged piece of a prayer. "God, I relinquish to Thee my strength and power, and I take refuge in Thy strength and Thy power. I magnify Thee, for that Thou gavest me being from naught ; exalted me over many peoples ; placed in my hands the reins (by which to control) Thy creatures, and made me vice-regent over Thy earth. God, take me by the hand in straits ; reveal to me the aspects of truth, help me to (do)

- (48) Thy will and protect me from error ; Snatch not from me the cover of Thy beneficence, and save me from the blows of evil ; shield me from the craftiness of the envious and the exultation of foes ; treat me kindly in all my vicissitudes ; shelter me with Thy wing on every side, Most Pitiful of those who pity." It befits an eminent ruler to be generous to the eminent of his subjects and to distinguish them by favours. A wise man said, "An eminent man should be either in the company of generous kings or in retreat with the ascetics, just as an elephant should only be seen in one of two places, either wild in the desert, or as a king's mount." As said the poet :

"Like the elephant either with a king or unapproachable in his feeding grounds."

- Association with evil, common or ignorant men is disliked in a ruler, for the hearing of their low speech, vile notions and low theories lowers ideals, abases rank, rusts the 'wits' and discredits the ruler, while association with the noble and the company of the eminent elevates ideals, sharpens the 'wits,' widens the mind and facilitates expression. This fundamental principle has been contravened by rulers, who always 'keep open house' to the common folk amongst their subjects, and take them into their
- (24)

company and service. Not one of the Caliphs has avoided this. 'The ostensible reason' for their so doing was, "We will leave the great as great, but, if we single out a commoner, we raise his reputation and advance him till he becomes an important man. In the same way if we turn from an important man we abase him till he becomes one of the lowest commoners." So indeed it is, for that is a peculiar attribute of the ruler, as we have already mentioned. All this is derived from the divine attributes, for, if a grain of the divine grace falls in (his) soul that man becomes a prophet, a religious leader or a ruler. If it falls to the share of time, that day becomes an important religious occasion, 'the night of destiny,' days of the pilgrimage, festivals or visitation, for all peoples. If that grain falls to the share of a place, it becomes the Holy House of Meccah or Jerusalem, shrines, places of public prayer, visitation or worship, or 'holy ground.' Here is the place for an anecdote. There was in Baghdad a porter called 'Abd 'al Ghani, son of Darnus, who found favour in the time of Mustansir till he became keeper of one of the pigeon lofts in the Caliph's palace. He continued to ingratiate himself with the son of Mustansir,—Must 'asim the last Caliph, who, in his father's time, was imprisoned. This keeper of pigeons continued cultivating  
 50 him by (various) services all the time of Mustansir till Mustansir died, and his son Abu Admad 'Abd 'allah Must'asin sat on the Caliph's throne.

He recognised his obligation to the pigeon keeper for services, and appointed him chief pigeon keeper. Finally, he made him "groom of the chamber" in his palace, an intimate friend, and advanced him so far that, when he met the 'Minister,' the latter rose to (greet) him, and cleared everyone out of the audience hall, when the son of Darnus was present. The reason for the minister's clearing the audience hall 'thus' was because he might have come with a verbal message from the Caliph. He was nicknamed Najm 'ad Din "The Intimate Friend," and he became most intimate with the Caliph. He reached such a position that he used to take the part of



the 'Secretary of State' with the Caliph, and the Secretary submitted his memoranda and important matters through him, and used to pay the former a large annual sum to protect him in his absence, and to foster his interests with his Majesty the Caliph. A discussion took place between me and the late Jamal 'ad Din 'Ali, son of Muhammad 'al-Dastajird, on the subject of this son of Darnus. I approved the view taken by Mast'asim in benefiting him and said, "He served him (well) and I have verified it. He (i.e., the Caliph) rewarded him and there is nothing wrong in this. The late Jamal 'ad Din replied to this effect, "His giving such a stupid man as that power over people's reputations and possessions, and an official position such that he appointed and dismissed ministers was wrong on Must'asim's part and an indication of his ignorance (of affairs). Otherwise, if he had wanted to benefit him and reward him for his previous service, he should have done so through a present of money or by raising his rank without disordering thereby affairs of state, and without giving occasion for detraction of the Caliph's intelligence." The perception of Jamal 'ad Din in this matter was more acute than mine, and he had the right of it. This discussion between us occurred in a letter I wrote to him, in which some circumstance necessitated mention of this affair. He wrote to me in reply to it and attached my (original) letter, because I had asked him to return my letter. At this date the two letters, in my hand and his (respectively) are in my possession. Suitable to an eminent ruler and perfecting his excellence, are that he should have lofty ideals, he large-hearted, be interested in leadership, preparing for it methods of (attaining) it, keeping it in view, taking thought to extend his empire and to raise its standing, without perpetual pursuit of pleasure, inclination to luxury, or continuous occupation with play. A Persian wise man said, "The ideals of the commons are small, those of rulers great. Rulers' 'minds' are busied with all kinds of major matters, those of the people with the most trivial things. The ruler should understand that leadership is a bride whose dowry is the lives (of men)."

At Siffin, Mu'awiyah looked at the army of 'Ali,—the Commander of the faithful,—and turned to 'Amr son of al 'As, saying, "He who wants much risks much. I have considered my object, and death in pursuit of power is a better end than life in obscurity." A poet said :—

" 'Tis a soul ; should it die, generous men have died  
before it ; should it survive ('tis only) for adversity.

If a soul has not greedily pursued lofty deeds, that  
(soul) is of the dead whilst still alive."

One of the best sayings on this subject is that of 'Imr 'al Qais :

" If my object were a mean livelihood, a little wealth  
were enough for me and I would not seek (more);  
But my object is glory firmly rooted, and such as I  
have already attained it."

Among the things which perfect a ruler's excellence is that his power of choice should be sound, not exposed to chance harm, then he will choose men extremely well. Nasir was 'unique' in his choice of men. One of his methods for obtaining knowledge of a man, concerning  
53 whose affairs he was in doubt, was to publish amongst the  
(26) people his wish to appoint him to such and such an office. Then he would delay implementing this for some days and the town would be full of rumours about that man, the people divided about him, some describing the man's excellent qualities and approving that project, others mentioning the man's faults and imputing error to the Caliph. The Caliph had spies and informers of whom no notice was taken, and who used to mix with all sorts of people. They wrote to him the 'outpourings' of the people on that matter, with the result that, with his soundness of view and discrimination, he knew which of the two opinions was the weightier and more correct. If, in his view, the (description) favouring the man were weightier, he appointed him and invested him ; if the description of those who spoke against him carried more weight with him, and the man's incompetence was apparent,

he would abandon him and turn aside from him. In short, good choice is an important fundamental. The poet said :

“He who (puts) a wolf to shepherd his milkers is the author of his own undoing ;

He hopes for its competence when treachery is its custom, and he who ‘deals with’ a traitor, will wear (the sackcloth of) remorse.”

54 One of the things disliked in a ruler is excessive inclination to women, addiction to love of them, and spending time in private with them. To consult them in affairs is to induce inefficiency, an invitation to disorder, and an indication of weakness of judgment,—unless indeed they are consulted with the intention of doing the opposite ! As God said, “Consult them and do the opposite.” In this tradition are implied a question and an answer. Should someone say, “If the opposite of their views is desired, what use is there in consulting them over a matter ? It would be enough to say, ‘Do the opposite of what they advise’.” Two forms of answer (are possible), of which the first is that the initial imperative is permissive and the second imperative a command, i.e., if you consult them you must oppose them, and of which the second is that the correct course is always to oppose their views, so, when you are in doubt, consult them and, if they incline to anything, then you will know that the correct course is the opposite to it. Herein appears the utility of consulting them, i.e., thereby is the correct course indicated. It is related of ‘Adud ad Daulah Fannakhusru, son of Buwaih, that one of his maids inspired him with violent love and obtained control over him. He was so occupied with her (as to neglect) the administration of the country, —so much so that disorders appeared in it. His ‘minister,’ when alone with him, said to him, “Sovereign, the maid occupies you to the detriment of your government, so much so that shortcomings in numerous directions have befallen it, solely because you are too preoccupied with this servant to attend to your government. The correct

55 course is for you to leave her and attend to putting right what has gone wrong in your country. (So) he spoke, and, a few days later, 'Adud ad Daulah was sitting in one of his 'balconies' overlooking the Tigris. He then summoned the maid who came and he occupied her attention for a time till she was off her guard, then he pushed her into the Tigris and she drowned. So his mind was freed from love of her, and he occupied himself with putting right his affairs of state. People admired this deed of 'Adud ad Daulah, and, on account of it, attributed (27) to him strength of will, his will being strong enough to kill his beloved. But I see in this deed an indication of 'Adud ad Daulah's weakness not strength of will, for had he not been conscious in himself of extreme infatuation for her, he would not have sought means to destroy her. He left her alive and turned away from her, that would have been an indication of strength of will. To each type of subjects corresponds a type of administration. The upper classes are administered by nobility of character and gently guiding aright. The middle classes are administered by a combination of interest and fear, while the common people are administered by fear and by being constrained to the straight path and forced to (the) obviously right. Understand that a ruler stands to his subjects as a doctor to an invalid. If the latter's constitution is delicate, the former's (regimen) is delicate too, and the former insinuates nasty medicines into pleasant tasting things, and, by every possible means, tricks the latter, 56 to attain his objective of curing him. But if the latter's constitution is strong, the former treats him with bitter, 'straight' and strong medicine. Therefore it is not fitting for a ruler to threaten one for whose instruction the cold shoulder or a frown is enough; nor to imprison one for whose instruction a threat is enough; nor to chastise one for whose instruction imprisonment is enough; nor to chastise one for whose instruction imprisonment is enough; nor to execute with the sword one for whose instruction chastisement with the stick is enough. The differentiation of these conditions one from another, i.e.,

knowledge of the temperament for which a threat is enough and imprisonment unnecessary, or imprisonment enough and chastisement unnecessary, requires nice perception, sound discrimination, clear thinking, complete vigilance and perfect comprehension. How extreme are the complexities of characters and how involved temperaments and natures ! A ruler should be circumspect in ordering an execution and in taking life. He should realise that it is an event whereafter no life in this world (remains) to the living. Even if all the people in the world were to try their utmost to restore him to life, they could not do so, so, because of this fact, he should deliberate over taking life and destroying the human form, procrastinate and reflect until the proofs of the necessity of the execution are well established. Then, if it is necessary, he should perform in the usual way, without elaboration, use of strange methods or mutilation of the executed man. It is related on the authority of the Lord of mankind,<sup>1</sup>

(28) "Avoid mutilation even of a 'mad' dog." When the son of Muljam struck 'Ali, son of Abu Talib, with a sword, the former was seized and imprisoned, till it was seen what would happen to 'Ali. 'Ali collected his children and intimate friends, and said, "Children of Abu Talib do not collect from all sides,—saying, "The Commander of the faithful has been killed, the Commander of the faithful has been killed," and do not mutilate the man, for I heard the Messenger of God prohibit mutilation, even of a 'mad' dog. (Wait and) see ; if I die from this blow of mine, then give the man a blow for a blow." One of the uses of procrastination and deliberation over an execution is security from remorse when remorse is of no avail. The best rulers and caliphs used to make much use of this habit, nor haste to execute a well-known or famous man, fearing they might need him later on, and he be 'out of their reach.' They would imprison him in the dungeons of their palaces, and provide for him all his needs, such as appetizing food, fruit, ice, drink, and soft bedding. They would convey to him books for his recreation and debar

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the Prophet. <sup>2</sup> Lit. that bites.'

people from news of him till his family and friends were sure that he had perished. His property and that of his friends would be confiscated, his stores and deposits brought out, and he be enumerated among the dead. So it would continue till they had need of him. Then they would bring him forth with honour after having been punished and disciplined.

“Him whose father does not punish, nights and days will punish.”

Here is a slippery place, whereon have fallen the best of rulers. A ruler is often conceited, longing to be widely known for energy, firmness and strong administration. So he thinks little of executions, ordering them becomes easy to him, and he is prompt to do so, his object being to establish awe and strengthen his administration. But he does not pay attention to what is involved in taking life, which is forbidden except for due cause. This is one of the most dangerous things for a ruler and it is proper that he should always himself dislike executions, avoiding them wherever possible, unless necessity demands it and there is no method of avoiding it. In that case, he should order it with a firm mind and resolute heart, for the execution of one is preferable to leaving it until the execution of five is necessitated, and the execution of five is better than leaving them till disorder spreads and the need to execute a hundred is reached. Because of this, God Most High has said, “In the law of retaliation is your life,” and it is said “Executions prevent executions.” The poet said :

“Neighbour, by shedding blood is bloodshed spared,  
and by executions all life escapes execution.”

Mutannabi said :

“The highest nobility is not safe from harm till blood  
be poured around them.”

A wise man recommended to a certain ruler as follows :  
“King, your sword and wealth (suffice) alone ; with the latter ‘cultivate’ those who will be grateful to you ; with the former reap the ungrateful.” A man came to the

(20) Messenger of God and said to him, "Messenger of God, I have committed adultery, so exact from me the penalty." The Messenger of God showed him the cold shoulder, and turned to his right. The man moved round till he faced him and repeated it. The Prophet again showed him the cold shoulder, but he repeated it, and asked for the penalty to be exacted from him. The Messenger of God disliked taking his life, and said to him as one instructing him, "Was it not just that you kissed, cuddled or went slightly wrong without actually doing it?" He replied, "No, Messenger of God, I committed adultery." The Mes-  
 60 senger of God turned to his relations and friends as one instructing them also to make an excuse for him, and said, "It is as though his mind were disordered." They replied, "No, Messenger of God, so far as we know, he is in his senses." Then no device remained to the Prophet and he ordered that the full penalty should be exacted from him. Perpetual imprisonment in hidden dungeons replaces execution with (the added benefit of) security from the remorse to be feared in the case of the latter. The perfect ruler should also pay close attention to the various kinds of punishments. How many a punishment has resulted in (spilling) the lifeblood of the punished man though the taking of his life was not intended ! Of them the severest is surely punishment by fire, and (this) is an unhallowed punishment, because punishment by fire is especially reserved for the deity, and it is not permitted to (His) servant to share it with him. Consideration of the various sorts of punishment is entrusted to the discretion of the paramount ruler ; he calculates what the contemporary circumstances require, but the general principle in this is that the ruler himself should dislike it, neither revel in it, nor be hasty about it, nor order it unless some pressing emergency demands it. He should not by it implement a personal interest, nor quench thereby wrath in his own  
 6 breast. This is difficult of attainment, and none ascend thereto save him whom Divine assistance 'helps.' It is said that 'Ali, in one of his battles, laid a man low, and then sat on his chest to cut off his head. That man spat

in his face, and 'Ali stood up and left him alone. When asked why he stood up and refrained from killing the man after getting him into his control, he said, "When he spat in my face, I was wroth with him and I feared that, if I killed him, there would be an element of anger and wrath in the killing. But I do not want to kill him except for the sake of God Most High alone. Abrawiz said, "Kings should insult by deeds not words, and be imprudent with (their) hands not tongues. An Arab poet has put this idea into verse, saying :

- (30) "Our hands were boors, but civil our thoughts, we  
insult with deeds not by speech."

Addiction to play, listening to 'music,' and spending time thus are undesirable in a ruler. The poet Abu 'lFath al Basti said :

"When the ruler is occupied in play, judge his realm  
(ripe) for woe and war ;

See you not the sun descending in the Heavenly Scale  
at evening, and that is the (zodiacal) sign of  
play and joy."

- 62 No king abandoned himself to play and sport so much as Jalal ad Din, son of Khuwarazmshah. When he was flying from the Mongols and they pursuing him, as he mounted to leave a town, they dismounted at it after him, and where he spent a morning they, wishing to catch him up, spent an evening. Despite this he continuously drank wine, assiduously listened to drums and flutes, did not go to sleep unless drunk nor woke without being wine fuddled and dizzy. Daily his troops diminished, and his affairs daily became more disordered. Each moment his mind became duller and his keenness blunted, without his being aware of it, nor paying attention to it, till his poet addressed him (as follows, in Persian) :

"The king made heavy by wine, what does he want ?  
To rise !

He is always drunk, what does he wish ? To rise !  
The king is drunk, the world in ruins, the foe behind  
us and before,

Plainly the king wants to rise from amidst all that ! "



- 63 Amongst those rulers who were brought low by play and sport was Muhammad Amin, son of Zubaidah. He was fond of play and sport and addicted to amusements. It is said that once he and his 'minister' Fadl, son of Rabi', were playing at backgammon, and they bet their rings. Amin won, took the ring, and at once sent to call a jeweller. On the ring was inscribed, "Fadl, son of Rabi'." He told the jeweller to inscribe beneath it "Had." There and then the jeweller carved that, and he returned the ring to Fadl, son of Rabi', who did not know what had been carved on it. Some time passed, and, days later, Fadl, son of Rabi', met him, when the latter said to him, "What is written on your ring?" He replied, "My name and that of my father." Amin took it and said, "What is this inscribed beneath your name?" When Fadl, son of Rabi' read it, he realised what had happened, and said "There is no power nor might save in God Most High, the Great! Truly, this is a patent disgrace. I am your
- (81) minister, and already to-day such and such has happened, I have sealed with this letters for the marches with this signification! This is surely the end of the empire and its downfall. You will not be lucky nor we with you." Then, shortly after, occurred the civil war. Musta'sim, the last Caliph, greatly loved play and sport, listening to 'music.' His audience hall was hardly ever free from
- 64 that for a single hour. His boon companions and 'court' were all, together with him, addicted to luxury and past-times, caring not to correct him. According to a proverb, "The fool hears not shouts (of warning)." Notes, containing all sorts of warnings, were written to him by the people and thrown, with poetry in them, down at the gates of the Caliph's palace. One of them read:
- "Say to the Caliph, 'Gently, beware of what you will not like';  
 All sorts of strange calamities are upon you.  
 Rise with resolution! If not, woe and war will overwhelm you,  
 Destruction, rape, captivity, blows, robbery and theft."

On this subject, one of the poets of Musta'sim's reign composed a poem which began :

" You who ask and wish for the pure truth, listen,  
for I have the object sought and I compose poetry,  
Alas for the ruin of the people and the true faith,  
and what (terrible) blows of Fate have struck  
Baghdad !

Rape, murder and events to whiten a child's head,—  
punishment and bonds. . . ."

65 All this while he applied himself to listening to ' music ' and to hearing instruments of two and three strings, while his realm was tottering to ruin. A well-known story told of him is that he wrote to Badr ad Din Lu'lu', prince of Mosul, asking him for a company of musicians. At the same time came the messenger of the emperor Hulaku to him asking for ' artillery ' and siege materials. Badr ad Din said, " Look at the two requests, and weep for Islam and its people ! " I have heard that the Minister Muayyad ad Din Muhammad, son of 'Alqami, in the last part of the reign of Must'asim, was always quoting:

" How can weal be hoped for in the affairs of a people  
which has lost entirely resolution in (conducting)  
them ?

The obeyed lacks commonsense, whilst the speaker of  
commonsense is not obeyed."

They say that the perfect man should go to the utmost extreme either in the pursuit of power or in abandoning it.

(32) " If you are not a ruler (and) obeyed, be a slave obedient  
to his Creator,

If you rule not the world as you wish to in entirety,  
then abandon it in entirety."

66 Here is the place for an anecdote including (mention of) the requirements of leadership. It is said that Abu Talib al Jarrahi, the secretary, who was one of the most competent and best secretaries of his time, came to Rayy to meet His Excellency the son of 'Amid, from whom he met

with a poor reception, and what he saw at his court he disliked. So he left him, made for Azarabaijan, and went to its good and intelligent ruler. When the latter had tested the former and realised his merit, he asked him to stay with him and treated him generously. He stayed with him in excellent circumstances and wrote to the son of 'Amid rebuking him for ignoring his worth and for having lost a man such as himself. Quoting from the letter, "Tell me how will you argue if it is said to you, 'Why were you promoted leader?' Or if it is said, to you, 'What is leadership?'" Do you know what leadership is? Leadership is that the door of the leader should be closed at the (right) time for closing and opened at the (right) time for opening; that his audience hall be crowded with the best of the people; his benefactions reach each of them; his well doing overflow; his appearance be agreeable and his servant polite; his chamberlain generous and pleasant looking; his doorkeeper kind; his money liberally spent; his food eaten; his influence 'used'; and his notebook black with (listed) gifts, presents and benefactions. But your door is always locked, your audience hall empty, your benefactions despaired of; your kindness not expected; your servant is disliked; your chamberlain snarls; your doorkeeper is ill-natured; your money is Capella<sup>1</sup> and your notebook stuffed with the arrest of so and so, the extirpation of so and so, and the banishing of so and so. Is not this an exact description of you? Had I not trod your carpet and eaten your food, I would have published this letter, but I commend to you the truth of what I have mentioned, and only you and God have knowledge of it (i.e., this letter). I 'declare' that I have no copy of it, nor has any creature except myself seen it nor knows of it. Do you destroy it after perusal and do away with it. Salutations on him who follows the guidance." A ruler should reward well-doing with its like, and ill-doing with its like, so that his subjects may be always hoping for kindness from him yet fearful of his severity. Well said Nabigha to Nu'man, son of

<sup>1</sup> i.e., as far off as that star.

Mundhir, on this subject :

“ Help him who obeys you for his obedience in proportion to it and guide him in the proper path,  
But so punish him who rebels against you as to deter wrong-doing, but do not ‘ indulge in ’ hate.”

(38) The Persians said, “ Disruption of the realm, insolence of the subjects, and ruin of the country (come from) failure to promise and threaten. A good ruler should not boast of the trappings of royalty, nor of what he has or his stores hold of precious treasures or novel acquisitions, for these are its trifles not its realities, and a good man should not be attracted by them. So, too, he should not boast of his ‘ ancestors.’ His boast should only be in the merits he has acquired, the characteristics he has perfected, the culture of which he can make use and the instruments which he can perfect. A poet boasted to a wise man of his ‘ ancestors,’ and the trappings derived from wealth. That wise man said to him, “ If these things are a matter for boast, then theirs is the boast not yours, and, if your ancestors were as noble as you mentioned, theirs is the boast not yours.” al Asjadi said, “ A wise man used to ask when a man was described to him, ‘ Is he (known for his deeds) like ‘Isam, or (proud of ancestry) like ‘Izam?’ If he was answered in the former sense, he held the man in honour, but if in the latter he thought little of him.” “ Like ‘Isam ” refers to the saying :

“ The courage of ‘Isam has ennobled ‘Isam, taught him wheel and charge,  
And made him a ruler of high ideals.”

i.e., by wit and courage he became a leader. His saying “ like ‘Izam ” meant he boasted of his ‘ancestry,’ and rotten bones (‘izam). al Asjadi said to a friend of ‘Amid, scholar and soldier,<sup>1</sup> “What do you think of the minister?” He replied, “ I think his wood dry, his acquaintances horrid and his religion heterodox.” al Asjadi said,

<sup>1</sup> i.e., equally competent with both pen and sword.

"But don't you see that magnificence and renown, the retinue, the outward splendour, the grand house, the valuable furniture, and the showy attendants?" That man replied "Power is not becoming leader, nor is rule noble origin, nor good luck dignity." Where are the hopeful and the thankful? Where are the sincere eulogists? Where are those leaving satisfied? Where are the gifts and the largesses? Where are the robes of honour and presentations of ceremony? Where are the presents and invitations? 'Nonsense!' Leadership comes not from trifles nor can nobility be obtained from playthings. Have you not heard the poet's saying?

"Abu Ja'far, a (true) man's excellence lies not in much self-conceit,

(34) Nor in the fieriness of his mount, nor in the splendour of his clothes,

But in fine deeds and the noblest generosity widely famed."

The author of this book,—may God prosper his affairs and protect him from that which might harm him,—on the same subject (has written) :

"A true man's superiority to others, lies not in clothes, house, mule or 'saddlery'<sup>1</sup>

Superiority lies only in care of a neighbour, relation, friend or servant."

70 They say that administration is of five kinds: of the home, the village, the city, the army and the state. He who administers his home well, will administer his village well; he who administers his village well, will administer his city well; he who administers his city well, will administer an army well; and he who administers an army, well will administer a state well. But I do not think that this necessarily follows, for how many a member of the public who administers his home well lacks the power to administer important affairs, and how many a ruler administers his realm well, but his home badly? The realm is guarded by the sword and administered with the pen.

<sup>1</sup> Lit. bridle.

People disagree about the sword and the pen, as to which of the two is superior, and takes precedence. Some think that the pen has it over the sword, and urge, in support of their view, that the sword guards the pen, and so stands to it as a guardian and servant. Others think the sword superior, and urge that the pen serves the sword because it provides the soldiers with their pay, and so is a servant to it. Others say they are equal and that neither of them can function without the other. They say a realm is fertilised by generosity, populated by justice, secured by commonsense, protected by courage, and administered by leadership. They also say that the ruler of an empire must have courage. From advice given by wise men :

71 "Make war on your enemy your last expedient, and seize an opportunity when you have it. Entrust affairs to those competent in them. He who mounts the back of Haste is not safe from a fall. The (best) plan for him who finds himself at enmity with one over whom he has no power, is to flatter and cajole him, to show humility to him until he escapes by some means of deliverance harm by him." They say a ruler should cajole his enemies and the brothers of his enemies. By continued kindness to them their hostility will lapse. If they persist in their hostility after his kindness, they have wronged him, and "God will surely help the wronged." A wise man advised one of the best rulers as follows :

(85) "The world is ups and downs. Your gains therein have come to you despite your weakness, your losses therein you could not avoid by your strength. Evil is a thing of fear, and only the sensible man is afraid of it, good is an object of desire which everyone seeks. Frequently good 'comes out' of evil and evil out of good. This (conception) is taken from the Word of God, "Perhaps a thing which you dislike will be better for you, and a thing you like worse for you ; God knows and you know not." Here is the place for an anecdote. Nur  
72 ad Din, prince of Syria, ordered Asad ad Din Shirkuh, the paternal uncle of Salah ad Din Yusuf, son of Ayyub, to proceed to Egypt on a mission with which he had

entrusted him, and Asad ad Din Shirkuh said, "Sir, I shall not be able to do this unless Yusuf, son of my brother, accompanies me." So Nur ad Din ordered Salah ad Din to accompany his paternal uncle Asad ad Din Shirkuh, But Salah ad Din asked him to excuse the journey, and said he had made no preparations. Then Nur ad Din ordered that his objections should be 'overruled' and compelled him to go. Salah ad Din said, "I left with my uncle unwillingly, as one led to the slaughter house. When we reached Egypt and had stayed there a while, 'as you know,' I became ruler of Egypt." Then Salah ad Din ruled it, his realm extended and later he took Syria. You will be told about this in 'full detail' when we speak of the 'Ayyubid' dynasty. They say enemies are of two kinds, the enemy who has wronged you and the enemy you have wronged. Do not trust the latter and be on guard against him as much as you can, but do not fear the former at all, for often he will be ashamed of the wrong done you, feel remorse, and make you a return of something pleasing to you. If he persists in wronging you, He in whom all wronged seek refuge will do you justice against him. Often an enemy helps and a friend injures. Alexander said, "My enemies have helped me more than my friends, because my enemies censure me and reveal my faults, and rouse me thereby to my errors so that I correct them. But my friends gloss over my errors to me and encourage me in them." A poet said :

"Only those I know have harmed me, God reward every one I do not know."

Alexander was asked, "How did you get this vast empire, despite (your) youth?" He replied, "By winning over enemies, and making them become my friends through benefits and kindness, and by 'keeping' my friends through greater kindness and wider generosity." A wise man said, "Nothing rebuts the violence of a powerful enemy like submission and humility, just as green plants are safe from a tempestuous wind through their pliability,

so that they bend with it in whatever direction it blows." Kings are addicted to nothing so much as to hunting and the chase, and this is a subject occasioning wonderful tales and strange anecdotes. Mu'tasim was exceptionally addicted to it. He built, in the region of the little Tigris, a wall many 'miles' in length, and when they organised a drive, they narrowed its flanks and kept 'turning' the game till they were 'cornered' behind that wall, so as 'to come to bay' between the wall and the Tigris, where  
 74 no 'field' remained to the game. When they were 'cornered' in that place, he entered it with his children, relations and the inhabitants of his 'court' and they killed as they pleased, amusing themselves with killing what they wanted to kill and releasing the rest. It is said that Mu'tasin branded a number of wild asses and released them because he had been told they were long lived. Here is the place for a strange and remarkable anecdote. Safi ad Din 'Abd al Mumin, son of Fakhir of Urmia, told me that Mujahid ad Din Aibak, the Assistant Secretary, related to 'him' 'the following story.' "We once went out hunting among the attendants of the Caliph Must'asim. We organised a 'drive' near Jalhama,—a village between Baghdad and Hillah. The drive closed in till those of us on horseback could catch the animals by hand. From a number of wild asses emerged one, large in size and on it a brand which we read. It was the brand of Mu'tasim, and between Mu'tasim and Must'asim was a space of 500<sup>1</sup> years." Among the curious (tales) I have heard about hunting is this one, related to me by a scholar of Baghdad, who said that Muhammad, son of Salih the falconer, told him as follows: "we were out hunting with Sultan Abaga one day when, as we were with him, three cranes 'towered' perpendicularly. We loosed a falcon, which gained height then swooped on the topmost crane and 'struck it down' so that it fell on the second and 'struck it down.' Then both of them fell on the third and 'struck that down.' Then all three fell in front of the Sultan, who marvelled greatly at this, and

<sup>1</sup> Really, 400.



- 75 presented us all with clothes." In (the book) *Jihan Kushay*, 'Ala ad Din said that the drive of Jinkizhan was three months' journey in extent. But I consider this to be far-fetched. Rulers are not so violently addicted to hunting, nor so extremely fond of it, nor would they allot big sums to falconers nor give them such valuable fiefs nor such facility of access, nor would they give it so much of their time purposelessly or in (mere) sport. But included in hunting are many advantages from which much profit may be obtained. Of these, the highest
- (37) objective is the exercise of troops in the 'charge,' the wheel and the incline; practising them in horsemanship; training them to shoot with (bows and) arrows, in sword and mace play; accustoming them to killing, bloodshed, and to mind the sight of blood little and the taking of life; also, trying out horses, ascertaining the swiftest and most enduring of them in prolonged gallops; also, 'exercise' in the hunt is 'physical exercise' which promotes digestion and keeps the constitution in health; further, venison is superior to other meat because its natural heat has been increased, owing to the terror inspired by the beasts of prey (used by the hunter), and it increases the heat of a man. A wise man said, "The best meat is that which a beast of prey has well terrified"; again, the amusing and marvellous coincidences which occur in it, of which there
- 76 has already been made some mention. Yazid, son of Muawiyah, was exceptionally addicted to the chase, always amusing himself with it. He used to put on his hunting dogs, bracelets of gold and cloths embroidered with it. He gave each dog a slave to look after it. It is said that 'Ubaid, son of Ziyad, took from a man of Kufah 400,000 dinars as a fine, which he deposited in the Treasury. That man left Kufah making for Damascus to complain of his case to Yazid. At that time Damascus was the seat of government. When the man came to the outskirts of Damascus he enquired for Yazid, and they told him that he was a hunting. He did not want to enter Damascus in Yazid's absence, so he pitched his tent outside the city and stayed in it, awaiting the return of Yazid from the hunt.

One day, whilst he was sitting in his tent, unperceived, a bitch came up to him in the tent. On her feet were gold bracelets, and upon her a cloth worth a large sum. She was extremely thirsty, weary and half dead through weariness and thirst. He realised that she belonged to Yazid, and that she had got separated from him. He went up to her, gave her water and looked after her himself. Suddenly (appeared) a comely youth on a beautiful horse, in royal attire, covered in dust, who went up to him, greeted him and said to him, "Have you seen a bitch 'hereabouts'?" He replied, "Yes, sir, here she is in the tent. She has drunk water and rested. When she came here, she was extremely thirsty and weary." When Yazid heard 'him,' he dismounted, entered the tent and looked at the bitch, who was rested. He pulled at her lead to come out, then the man complained to him about the case, and told him what 'Ubaid Allah, son of Ziyad had taken from him. He (Yazid) asked for an inkpot, and wrote him (an order) that his property should be returned; he also presented him with valuable clothes, took the bitch and went out. The man returned immediately to Kufah and did not enter Damascus. Sultan Mas'ud also went to great lengths in this, put on his dogs silk embroidered cloths and bracelets. At one time he used to pay scant attention to Amin ad Daulah, son of al Tilmidh, the Christian doctor, though he was a man of parts and witty. The latter recited :

"He who puts brocade on his dog and is satisfied with my skin for me !

A dog is better than I in his eyes, also than he in mine !"

The Amir Fakhr ad Din Bughdi, son of Qashtimur, told me, "My grandfather, King Qashtimur made a large drive for a hunt, and there fell into it an extremely short man like a five-year-old boy. His nails were long and the hair on his body long and much. They detained him, brought him before Nasir and tried to make him speak, but he did not speak. They brought him food but he did

not eat, and water but he did not drink. They tried every possible means to get him to speak, but he was silent and did not utter a single word. One of those present said to him, "What do you want," but he did not reply. Then he said, "Do you want us to release you?" And he nodded his head, meaning "Yes." Then Nasir ordered that he should be released, and, when he was released, he ran off faster than an antelope, and entered the desert. Buzurjmihr was asked about Ardashir. He said, "He spent his nights in study, and gave his days to administration." He was asked, "Why was Kisra equally kind to all his subjects?" He answered, "For fear that a deserving man might escape his notice." It was said to him, "How was it possible for him to distribute his favour equally amongst his subjects?" He replied, "Yes; his intentions to them were good, and since his intentions to them were good he distributed his favour equally amongst them." It is related that 'Umar, son of al Khattab, said, "God administers more by the ruler than by the Koran." "Because," they say, "people fear immediate punishment more than they fear that of the hereafter." Unbecoming to the perfect king is detailed  
79 discussion in his audiences of food or women, lest in such matters he be one with the common people, for the latter in their lives are content with the trifling and confine themselves to it, abandoning major affairs. So, when they went to converse on a subject, their only matter is to describe the kinds of food or sorts of women. Al Ahnaf, son of Qais, said, "In our audiences, avoid mentioning food and women, for I dislike a man describing his belly, making much of his private affairs, or, by his inclination, turning to women." Abrawiz told his son, "Do not be so liberal to your troops that they can dispense with you, nor so mean to them that they become annoyed with you. Give them their pay according to the mean; deny them pleasantly; be prodigal of 'promises' to them, but be not prodigal to them of (actual) gifts." When Mansur  
(39) heard this saying, he found in it a 'text' suiting his dominant avarice, and said, "This is 'excellent,' and this was

the theory of him who said, "Starve your dog and he will follow you." An officer went up to him and said, "Commander of the faithful, I fear that someone else will show him a loaf and that he will leave you to follow him!" They say that the practice of power is more difficult than (to obtain) power itself, just as the practice of subordination is more difficult than subordination itself, and as the precautions (to be taken) after drinking medicine are more difficult than the medicine itself, and so to 'give gracefully' is often more difficult than (to find) the gift itself. The leader should be patient with the troubles of power. A wise Turk said, "The leader of an army should have ten attributes from the habits of animals, the boldness of the lion, the onslaught of the boar, the craftiness of the fox, the endurance of the dog when wounded, the predatoriness of the wolf, the vigilance of the crane, the generosity of the cock, the compassion of the hen for (her) chicks, the caution of the crow, the fat (condition) of the ta'ru,"—which is an animal in Khorasan that grows fat on travel and travail. They said that the best of those who seek power is he who is naturally 'talented,' and endowed with sure discrimination; who has acquired knowledge of the vicissitudes of eras and changes of empires that have occurred in the world; who knows how to cajole enemies, and hide his own secret,—for that is the 'hub' round which administration revolves. He should reinforce his own commonsense with that of 'others,' for that of one cannot stand alone. He should reflect on the ambiguities of views and be resolute when 'interests' differ, till (the truth) appears. As for determination, it is the foundation on which is built the security of the state. Precedence should have been given to it and mention made of it early in the book, together with its companion, desirable attributes. But commonsense includes it and presupposes it, and I will only just mention it, though there will be no harm in here alluding briefly to it. They say, "The most determined ruler is he whose work rules his play, and whose judgment overrides his desire, whose deeds express his intentions, whose will does

not counter his luck, nor anger his cunning. It is also said that the determined ruler is he who reviews and scrutinises himself till none of his people know his faults better than he knows them. Also that the determined ruler is he who schools his subjects to adopt his own habits and manners by kindness, winning methods and affability. On this subject there has occurred to me a subtle and recondite thought,—that subjects, when they reach the stage of conforming to the habits of the ruler and copying his manners, have become approvers of the results of his conduct and his acts because they do the same and take them as a guide. None of them can blame

(40) his way of life or vilify him, but if their habits are opposed to his habits and their natures contrary to his, they will be incited to vilify him and to blame his acts. This is a subtle recondite (thought) implicit in their statement. They say that the determined ruler is he whose decisions precede the occurrence which makes them necessary, and who anticipates a pressing danger before its onset. It was said to Alexander, "What is the sign that a rule will last?" He replied, "The use of determination and the taking of pains in all affairs." He was asked, "And what is the sign of its decay?" He answered, "Lack of earnestness in them." Anusharwan said, "Determination is guarding what you have and leaving alone that with which you are not concerned." Another said, "The most determined ruler is he who, is master of himself, governs his 'character,' restrains his desires and masters his yearnings." They say that the first requisite in a ruler is determination, but, when an emergency has arisen, then he should be painstaking and strenuous. It was said to one of the best rulers, "We see that when anyone comes to see you, you grant him a long audience though frequently he may be unworthy of that." He replied, "The true value of a man will not appear in one audience nor in two. I spend long in intercourse with him and test him in a number of audiences, then, if he has merit, I prefer him, but, if he falls short, I leave him alone." Another said, "No one should waive determination on

account of a victory obtained by an incompetent, nor wish to waive it on account of a failure befalling a resolute man." It has been said, "The man not advanced by his determination will be retarded by incompetence." It was said to Abd al Malik, son of Marwan, "What is determination?" He replied, "Subjugating people by wealth and winning them thereby, for they follow it,—wherever it is, there they will be, and, as it tends, so tend they." A ruler said to a wise man, "When is trust in an enemy determination?" He replied, "When you consult him in a matter which affects both you and him." Muslamah,<sup>1</sup> son of Abd al Malik, said, "I have not enjoyed any success which I began with incompetence, nor have I regretted my failure begun with determination." A good ruler should also give careful attention to affairs requiring secrecy, keeping them secure and safeguarding them, and preserving them from publication or disclosure.

88 This is a matter requiring maximum efficiency, for how many a realm has been ruined and life lost through publication of a single secret. Keeping a secret and concealing it are among the things most deserving a man's careful attention. An apposite tradition of the Prophet runs, "He who conceals secrets is master of his affairs." 'Ali said, "The best view is to keep a secret." A man entrusted another with a secret in conversation, and told him to conceal it. When the conversation was finished, he said to him, "Do you understand?" The other replied, "I have forgotten (it)." 'Amr, son of al 'As, said, "If my friend discloses a secret with which I have entrusted him, the blame is mine not his." When asked, "Why?" he replied, "Because I should have kept it from him in the first place." A verse on this subject runs :

(41) "If a man's breast is too narrow for his own secret,  
then the breast of him to whom the secret is  
confided is narrower still."

They say that a ruler's secret should only be entrusted to a single person, for, if so, it is less likely to be divulged,

<sup>1</sup> So vowelless text. Amar has Maslama.

whether through greed or fear, because, should it be divulged, the ruler will know for certain that its disclosure is due to that man. But, if a number have the secret, and it is divulged, then each one of them will throw (the blame) on another. Should the ruler punish them all, he will wrong them (all) save one, and, if he refrain from punishing them, they will be emboldened to continue to disclose his secrets. A poet said :

“ Your secret is that (known) to one man (alone), for a secret (known) to three is no secret.”

If a ruler needs must disclose his secret to a number, then it is best that he confide it to each one of them singly, and bid him conceal it, making him suppose that he has confided it to him alone. Thus there is a better chance that the secret will be kept. A Persian king consulted his ministers about a matter. One of them said, “ The king should only consult each one of us in private, for this keeps a secret best, is more sensible and safer, and best protects some of us from the mischief of others.” No dynasty took such care to keep its secrets nor went so far in guarding them as the 'Abbasid dynasty. On this subject marvellous (tales are told) of them. How many recipients of favours did they deprive of them, and lives did they take because of a word reported or a story told ? There will be no harm in relating here an amusing affair which occurred in the time of Nasir. Nasir had two grand children,—children of his son,—to whom he had given fiefs in Khuzistan. They had gone to them and lived on them. One night Nasir thought about them and yearned to see them. He was afraid that something might have happened to them in those regions. So he sent at once to his minister, al Qummi, and said to him, “ Send immediately to both of them some one to tell them both to come to Baghdad, and let no creature know of this.” The minister at once summoned a messenger. A number of messengers each night used to sleep at the gate of the ‘ offices ’ ; one of them slept with his saddle under his head and his food and money for journey (at hand). He had already said

goodbye to his family, and, if any emergency occurred during the night, he would go off on it. When the messenger 'reported' to the minister, the latter whispered to him the message and told him "Depart at once, and beware lest anyone know,—or your life will answer for it." Then the minister ordered (someone) to bring the key<sup>1</sup> of one of the gates in the wall for him, and he passed on to leave (the town). As he traversed a street, in opposite  
 (42) balconies two women were chatting. One of the two said to the other, "Do you see this messenger? Whither goes he at this hour?" The other answered her, "He is going to Dustar to fetch the Caliph's (grand) children, for he is anxious about them and yearns for them, as they have been there a long time." When he heard that, the  
 86 messenger immediately returned to the 'offices,' asking to see the minister, who, when he understood he had returned, was frightened at that, summoned him and asked why he had come back. He replied, "Sir, just now on such and such a street, such and such happened. I was afraid that, if I were to go on and this story to get about, you would not doubt that I had disclosed it, and I perish as a result." The minister said to him, "We know now, so depart and go (feeling) safe, for 'the devil' spreads abroad the most important news." A similar occurrence was related to me by a man of Baghdad, who said, "A friend told me, "We were walking in an irrigated pitch garden, and we were intent on entering the furthest kart of it when we heard the voice of a speaker, saying, "Abaqa is dead." We looked and saw no one. Then we noted the day's date, and when the news was published it was just as it said." It is related that the prince of Mosul,—I think he was Badr ad Din,—said to Majd ad Din, son of al Athir al Jazari, "I want you at once to indicate to me a faithful and trustworthy man, to whom a secret can be entrusted, so that I can whisper to him a confidential message to the Caliph, which he can take to him immediately. "The son of al Athir reflected for a moment and then said, "Sir, I knew no one of this description,

<sup>1</sup> Following the text. Amar after another MSS. "to open one," etc.



save my brother." He replied, "Then go, inform him and send him to me so that I can speak to him and he go off at once." Majd ad Din went to his house and told  
 87 his brother what had passed with the Caliph, and said to him, "My brother, in truth I only vouched for you what I knew (to be true) of you, so go and serve the Caliph and do what he advises." The son of al Athir 'reported' to the Sultan, and he whispered the message to him and said "Go at once." The son of al Athir came to his house to say goodbye to his brother, and found him standing in the hall waiting for him. He said to him, "Did the Sultan tell you anything?" He replied, "Yes." The other asked, "What was it," and he replied, "Brother, just now you vouched for my faithfulness and integrity to him, and (my ability) to keep a secret. Is it right for me to give you the lie at once? He told me something which I will tell to none save him to whom he bid me tell it." The narrator said, "Majd ad Din wept and 'blessed' his brother." Of poetry dealing with this is the (following) quotation from al Hamasi :

"True men,—I do not inform some of the secrets of others, though I am the confidant of them (all) ;  
 For every man in (my) heart is an empty hole and a place (to bury) confidences, which there is no hope of knowing;

(43) They disperse over the land, and their secrets (lie) beneath a rock men are powerless to cleave."

88 One of the best saying on this subject :

"Ask not people of my wealth nor its amount, but ask them what my fame and what my character,  
 Whether I deal spear wounds gaping wide, and keep secrets at risk of my head being cut off."

Also good is the saying of as Sabi :

"Tell my friend, 'Feel safe about the secret, since between me and you is no third'."

Another says :

"You, whenever you are entrusted with a secret, talk louder than the breeze over meadows."

From many verses by the author of this book on this subject :

“Never have friends dug a hole for a secret like my breast, even when drink undermines my reason.”

His also is the following :

“If glass betrays by its very nature, our master is more treacherous than glass !”

- 89 Among the matters requiring accurate thought, complete verification, and prolonged consideration are the reports of informers and calumniators. How many a calumniator or informer has satisfied his (own) anger by putting some wretch into the hands of a powerful ruler on suspicion (of something) of which he was innocent ? Then, the ruler, to whom the matter is confused, puts to death an innocent man for no crime. Later, when he knows the real facts, he feels remorse, when remorse is useless. So three suffer in common through this,—the informer and the recipient of the information, because they two have ‘damned’ themselves on account of what they have done; also the man informed against, on account of the haste with which he was punished,—so the three suffer in common. An apposite quotation from the Revelation is : “You who believe, if an evil man comes to you with news, verify it, lest you harm anyone in ignorance and feel remorse for what you have done.” Also a Tradition, “He who believes in God and the last day should not disclose to us the shame of his brother believer.” A man put up a memorandum to Yahya, son of Khalid, son of Barmak, in which he said that a foreign trader had died and left a beautiful girl, an unweaned son, and much wealth, and that the minister had most right to it. Yahya, son of khalid, endorsed the memorandum, “As for the man, may he rest in peace ; as for the girl, God protect her ; as for the baby, God guard it ; as for the wealth, God fructify it ; as for the man who gave us the information,
- 90 God curse him.” It is said that when ‘Abd al ‘Aziz, son of Merwan, ruled over Damascus,—and none of the
- (44) Umayyads was cleverer than he, though he was young,—

the people of Damascus took advantage of him, and said, "A youth has no knowledge of affairs and will listen to everything he is told." A man went to him and said, "God prosper the Amir; (here is) good advice!" He replied, "I would like to know what this good advice is that you bring me spontaneously without my having previously conferred any benefit on you. Give me your advice." He said, "I have a neighbour, who is a rebel, and has thrown off his allegiance,"—then he mentioned his faults. 'Abd al 'Aziz said to him, "You, my man, do not fear God Most High; you do not respect your Amir; nor do you 'do your duty to your neighbour.' If you wish we will look into what you have said. If you have told the truth, that will not benefit you so far as we are concerned, but, if you have lied, we will punish you. But, if you wish us to let you withdraw your statement, we will let you do so." Then he said, "Amir, let me withdraw," and he replied, "Go where you like, 'without God's grace,' for I see you are a wicked man." The minister 'Ali, son of Muhammad, son of al Furat,—Minister to Muqtadir,—loathed informers. If anyone put up to him a memorandum containing information against anyone, his chamberlain would go out to his gate, where people of all classes were standing, and say, "Where is the giver of this information?" The minister replied "so and so," and that man would be disgraced before (all) that company. So people left off informing in his time. 'Abd ar Rahman, son of 'Auf, said, "He who knows something shameful and discloses it is himself accessory to it." Qubadh al Malik wrote to his son Kisra a testament, included in which (was the following): "My dear son, do not take a miser into your counsels, for he will stop you short of extreme merit, nor a coward, for he will make things awkward for you when an opportunity is to be seized. My dear son, let the most hateful to you of your subjects be he of them who most discloses the faults of others. People<sup>1</sup> have faults which you, above all, ought to conceal, and to dislike being revealed when

<sup>1</sup> Amar's translation as a conditional protasis seems incorrect?

concealed. For you have to judge that which appears (in the open), while God judges the hidden. Dislike, on behalf of your subjects, what you dislike for yourself. Conceal the shame (of others) and God will conceal for you that which you wish concealed. Be not in a hurry to believe the informer, for he is dishonest, even though he may give good advice. Grant the people your pardon, as you wish that He who is above you may grant it to you." One of the pleasantest sayings on this subject was that of Mihyar, who (thus) addressed a "minister" :

" Sword of my victory, when the Indian (blade) pursues me; spring time of my life when time (itself) is summer hot.

Who makes my days again full and fat, when they for (other) creatures are lean (indeed)

Your noble gentle character, what has brought to it the filth of talebearers when it is nectar (itself) ?

(45) How can a lie lie hidden in the glass of your mind, when you are a transparent jewel."

92 Well said also on this, was :

" A tale bearer told tales of me to you and you did not think me worth (your) giving the lie to the news he brought,

If an imaginary ghost brought me information against you in the sweetest slumber, I would exchange sleep for wakefulness."

They have disagreed as to the unjust ruler and the weak just ruler. They (mostly) prefer the strong unjust, arguing that the unjust powerful (ruler) guards his subjects against 'vested interests<sup>1</sup>, (and protects them by his power from others than himself. His pride preserves them from being damaged by others than himself. So his subjects are in the position of who one is spared damage by all men but suffer damage by one. The weak just (ruler) neglects (the interests of) his subjects, and everyone has authority over them, and every hoof tramples them,

<sup>1</sup> Literally, ambitions or covetousness.

so that they are in the position of one who is spared damage by one and suffers damage by all. The two conditions differ greatly. A wise man said, "A ruler whom his subjects fear is better than a ruler who fears them. Anu-sharwan said, "My duty is to shed the blood of him who renders his blood liable (to shedding), to put straight him who passes his (due) limits, and to restrain him who goes beyond his rank." A wise man said, "There are two important matters, one of which can only be achieved singly and in isolation, the other only in being shared. The former is rule. If shared, it is spoiled. The latter  
 98 is opinion. If shared, it can be trusted to be right. A ruler should not minimise to himself the state of his enemy, even though he be actually of little account ; nor should the councillors of a ruler minimise to him the state of his enemy. For, if they minimise him, and the enemy conquer him, it will be disgraceful to him that an enemy of little account has conquered him ; while, if he conquer the enemy, it will not be a notable exploit. When the Prophet returned from the battle of Badr, together with prisoners and booty, and after God had killed the chiefs of the 'pagans,' the people met him some miles outside Medinah to congratulate him on the success. Some of the people asked others as to who was killed and who safe, and one of the companions said, "Indeed, we only killed some bald old women." The Prophet went to him in rebuke and kept showing him the cold shoulder. Finally he said, "Those, my 'friend,' are the chiefs." One of the best things I have seen on this subject was the saying of a wise Indian to one of their rulers : "Do not despise the state of enemies even though they are of little account, for, from a cotton thread if joined, is made a rope with  
 (46) which an elephant on heat is bound. In important matters, to wait a day is commonsense, and the best opinion is that which includes delay and verification. Thereby are errors of judgment saved. al Ahnaf, son of Qais, said to the friends of 'Ali, "Put off a decision to the second day, for its postponement will disclose to you its correctness."  
 94 A sensible man, when consulted about a matter, kept

silence. He was asked, "Why do you not speak?" and replied, "I do not like bread unless it is a day old." When the 'dissenters' resolved to take the oath of allegiance to 'Abd Allah, son of Wahf ar Rasibi (as their leader) they wanted his views, and he said, "'I avoid' unmatured decision and extempore talk." When they had completed taking the oath, he said, "Leave the decision for two days,"—i.e., defer it for a day and a night,—and he prayed for deliverance from a hasty decision. They say that Harith, son of Zaid, passed by al Ahnaf, son of Qais, and said to him, "If you were not a hasty man, I would consult you," and this indicates their dislike of an unmatured decision. They used not to consult a hungry man till he was satisfied, nor a prisoner till freed, nor a seeker till he had attained his desire, nor a thirsty man till he had drunk, nor one lost till he had found his road, nor one taken short till he had eased himself. A poet, describing a man of sense, said :

"Knowing the results of affairs as though the results of each affair (themselves) had told him."

I do not know a better saying than that of the son of ar Rumi on the superiority of a matured to an unmatured decision.

"The fire of reflection is a fire excellent for thorough cooking, but the fire of improvisation flashes (only).

People prefer it because it is quick, but it is quick because it goes with the wind."

95 Commonsense requires that a man embark not on an affair, extrication from which will be difficult. The poet said :

"It is not determination to near a matter distance from which will be sought soon after.

When you propose a thing, consider how you can get out of it after embarking (on it)."

They say it is preferable for a man not to embark himself on an affair, the extrication from which needs thought.

Mu'awiyah said to 'Amr, son of al 'As, "What has your shrewdness achieved?" He replied, "That I have never embarked on an affair without seeing a good way out of it." Mu'awiyah said, "But I have never embarked on an affair the extrication from which needed thought." Of great importance to a ruler is that he consider well, in despatching ambassadors, for from the man sent are the circumstances of the sender inferred. A wise man said, "When a man's

(47) circumstances are hidden from you, and you do not know the measure of his intelligence, consider his letter and his messenger, for they are two witnesses that do not lie." An ambassador should possess (certain) qualities. These include commonsense, to distinguish the straight from the crooked, honesty, and integrity lest he betray his mission. To how many an ambassador has flashed a flash, kindling greed, from him to whom he was accredited, so that he takes the latter's side and abandons that of him who sent

96 him. Mu'awiyah sent an ambassador to the Emperor of Byzantium (chosen) from his near relations, in whom he trusted, to arrange a truce. Mu'awiyah made severe terms, and when the ambassador reached the Emperor of Byzantium, the latter strove to make the former modify those terms, but he declined, so the Emperor took him aside and said to him, "I hear that you a a poor man, and that, when you want to ride to Mu'awiyah, you hire an animal." He replied, "It is so." (The emperor) said, "Bethinks you do nothing for yourself. I have plenty of money here, so take enough to enrich yourself for ever, and leave Mu'awiyah." (The emperor) brought him 20,000 dinars, which he accepted, modifying the terms for him and completing the affair of the truce. He then returned to Mu'awiyah, and when Mu'awiyah looked at the 'treaty,' he understood what had happened and said to him, "Bethinks you worked only for him," and resolved to punish him, but he said, "Commander of the faithful, pardon me." He replied, "I have pardoned you," and he showed him the cold shoulder. In the actions of Kamal ad Din Muhammad, son of ash Shahrzuri,—when Atabak Zanki, prince of Mosul, sent him on a mission

to Baghdad to arrange the affair of Rashid,—lies a reminder of the necessity of careful consideration in the choice of ambassadors. What happened was that, when Rashid was invested as Caliph in Baghdad, he left it and went to Mosul, seeking help from Atabak Zanki, with whom he had a private interview, to whom he made promises, and in whom he encouraged hopes that, if restored to the Caliphate, he would grant him favours and honours.

Atabak Zanki was foolishly pleased at that, and under-  
 97 took to put his affairs right with Sultan Mas'ud, and he resolved to despatch an 'official embassy' to Baghdad to deal with this matter, and he chose for the embassy Kamal ad Din, son of ash Shahrizuri, judge of Mosul.

He sent him with instructions to use all possible arguments to settle the affair of Rashid, and to cancel what they had arranged about the Caliphate of Muqtafi. So Kamal ad Din went to Baghdad. The son of al Athir related, "My father told me that the above-mentioned Kamal ad Din told him as follows :—"When I was with the 'official embassy' I was told to take the oath of acknowledgement of the Commander of the faithful. I replied, "We have in Mosul a Commander of the faithful to whom the people<sup>1</sup> are bound by a previous oath." He added "There was a long conversation on the matter, and I returned to my lodging. When night arrived an old woman came to me secretly, had a private conversation with me and gave me a message from Muqtafi, the contents of which blamed me for what I had said and my  
 (48) disregard of him. I replied, "To-morrow, I will do him a service of which the results will appear." On the morrow, I repaired to the 'offices,' and I was spoken to about the oath. I said, "I am a canon lawyer and a judge. It would be wrong for me to take the oath without my first proving the deposition of the previous (holder of the office)." They brought me witnesses who gave me evidence of the wrong-doing of Rashid. Then I said,

<sup>1</sup> Lit. the necks of the people.



"This is proof (enough), there is no more to be said, but we ought to get some advantage from this affair, for the Commander of the faithful, Muqtafi, has obtained the Caliphate of God on His earth, and the Sultan has no more to fear from him who was aiming at him. But we, with what shall we return?" The matter was referred to Muqtafi, who ordered that Ababak Zanki should be given possession of Asrifin, Darb Harun, and Harba. Then I took the oath to Muqtafi, and returned, having already obtained a good sum of money, presents and gifts. In truth, I do not know which of his two aspects in this act of his surprises me the more, his deception of him who sent him and his shaming him together with him who had sought his protection, (—for the sole result of the embassy of Kamal ad Din was to strengthen the authority of Muqtafi, and confirm the deposition of Rashid,—) or his telling such an act of himself. The same happened to 'Amid al Mulk al Kunduri, Minister to the Sultan Tughrulbak, who was sent by the latter to demand a woman in marriage for him. al Kunduri went, demanded her for himself and wed her, then rebelled against Tughrulbak. When the latter had conquered him, he did not kill him, but castrated him and kept him in his service, needing his competence. On that the poet al Bakharzi, who was a friend of Kunduri, said :

"They say the Sultan has deleted from him with his cutlass the hall mark of stallions, and he was a violent stallion. !

I replied, 'Be silent, his virility has increased now he lacks his two females,<sup>1</sup>

A stallion is too proud to have part of himself dubbed female,<sup>1</sup> so he removed them by the roots."

Another verse composed on that is :

"When you need to send (an ambassador) send a wise man and do not give him instructions."

99 Better and more perfect on this subject is the following :

<sup>1</sup> i.e., testicles—the Arabic word having this double meaning.

“ When you send an ambassador on some matter, make him understand (what you want) and send him (well) instructed.

But if you fail to do that, then do not blame him if he does not know the unknown.”

Liberality to his noble subjects adorns a ruler. By this they are won<sup>1</sup> to him so as to enter the retinue of his  
(40) servants, and his train. The best rulers have always attended to this principle, and ever preferred their noble subjects with various kinds of distinction, so as to enslave them. Mu'awiyah was the ruler most attentive to this principle. He used to give 'Abd Allah, son of Ja'far, son of Abu Talib, and 'Abd Allah, son of 'Abbas, vast sums of money annually. Sufficient (proof) of that for you is that 'Aqil, son of Abu Talib, left his brother, 'Ali, son of Abu Talib, and sought Mu'awiyah in hope of largesse. This was not because the Commander of the Faithful was stingy, for he rivalled the wind in generosity and open-handedness, and he used to spend in alms and good works  
100 all his revenues from his properties, but 'Aqil wished for more than his share from the common<sup>2</sup> treasury, which the integrity of the Commander of the Faithful did not sanction. Mu'awiyah used to give in mundane interests, and his mental processes were not those of the Commander of the Faithful. Look at Kamal ad Din Haidarah, son of 'Ubaid al Husaini, of Mosul,—the head of his family and the foremost of them in age, sanctity, merit, and piety,—how the prince of Mosul, Badr ad Din, won him by the benefits he granted him, so that he eulogised him and became one of his string of poets. From his poems on him (is the following) :

“ Greetings on an effort of which the lucky star has helped you, and its ' triumph ' will be completed on the day of ' vaunting.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lit., necks incline.

<sup>2</sup> Lit., of the Moslems.

<sup>3</sup> i.e., when the bards vie in vaunting the various deeds of tribes, etc.—ancient Arab practice,

Congratulations on an arrival, the bringer of the good news of which appeared just as the crowds come to congratulate.

Where is an equal to the noble and illustrious Badr ad Din? Never indeed will an equal to him be found."

Despite his being (only) one of his poets and one of his string of eulogists, Badr ad Din used, after the death of Kamal ad Din Haidarah, when passing his grave,—it was a grave standing alone outside Mosul to the south east,—to leave his troops and enter it to pay his respects, and pray for himself at his tomb.

## SECOND SECTION

## DEALING WITH DYNASTY BY DYNASTY

WE have completed discussion of matters affecting rulers and the principles of state craft, from which (50) may be known the manner of life of a good ruler deserving the leadership, also the special attributes which distinguish the ruler from the subjects ; the duties owed to the ruler by the subjects and to them by him. During this, incidental mention has been made, in a concise way, of the general characteristics of the dynasties. Of all the virtues and merits contained in these pages, God gave a large share to our Master, the excellent ruler. May God surround him with all kinds of His virtues, and cause him to reach the furthest extent of His help and His assistance. For God, by His former grace, has guided him towards goodness of character, and, by His mysterious favour, has preferred him above most peoples. Now is the time to begin the record, dynasty by dynasty. The first (102) dynasty is that of the Four. It started with the death of the Messenger of God, and the taking of the oath of allegiance to Abu Bakr, son of Abu Quhafah, in 11 A.H., and ended when the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali, son of Abu Talib, was killed in A.H. 40. Know that it was a dynasty not after the fashion of worldly dynasties, but more comparable to the circumstances of the Prophets or the conditions of the hereafter. The truth is that its (outward) fashions were those of the Prophets, its conduct that of the saints, its conquests those of mighty kings. As for its (outward) fashions, they were roughness in style of living, and short commons in food and clothes. One of them used to walk in the markets afoot, wearing an old patched shirt reaching half way down his leg, with

fibre sandals on his feet, and a whip in his hand, with which he exacted the full penalty from anyone obnoxious to punishment. Their food was (the same) as the humblest food of their poor people. The Commander of the Faithful propounded a proverb about honey and 'white' bread. One of his sayings ran, "If I liked, I would let myself strain the honey through the best of this bread." Know that they were not on short commons in food and clothes through poverty, nor inability (to obtain) the best clothes and the most delicious food, but they used so to do in order to console their poor subjects ; to break the self of desire for them and to discipline it to become accustomed to the condition best for it. That apart, each one of

108 them had a large fortune, palm trees, orchards and other means, but most of their expenditure<sup>1</sup> was in (various) forms of piety and good works. The Commander of the Faithful, Ali, raised a large (income) from his properties, all of which he expended on the poor and feeble, whilst

(51) he and his family were content with clothes made of rough cotton cloth, and loaves of barley bread. As for their conquests and wars, their horse reached (North) Africa, the furthest parts of Khurasan and crossed the River (Oxus.) 'Ubaid Allah, son of al 'Abbas, was appointed governor of Samarqand, died there, and there is his grave. The first of their wars was the struggle with the apostates. A short explanation of how that came about. When the Messenger of God died, some Arabs apostasised from Islam, and refused to pay the tithe. They said, "If Muhammad had been a Prophet, he would not have died." Men of sense and understanding exhorted them, saying to them, "Inform us about the prophets ; do you acknowledge their prophetic office ?" They replied, "Yes." The others said, "Did they die ?" They replied, "Yes." Then they said, "Then what is it you disown in the prophetic office of Muhammad ?" But talk was inefficacious with them, and Abu Bakr prepared an army against each section of them. The armies set out against them and the victory lay with the Moslem armies, which

<sup>1</sup> Amar's "revenue" a slip ?

annihilated them by killing or taking prisoner. Those of them who survived returned to Islam, and paid the tithe. One of their (i.e., this dynasty's) battles, was the civil war with Musailamah, the liar, of which a brief account  
 104 (follows). There appeared, in the days of Abu Bakr, a man called Musailamah, who claimed to be a prophet, and that a revelation from Heaven had descended to him. Many men joined him from his tribe and others. Then an Arab woman called Sajah appeared, who, also, claimed to be a prophetess, and that a revelation had descended to her. The Bani Tamim,—who were her tribe,—followed her, then she went to fight Musailamah. Her followers were more numerous than his, and when Musailamah knew of her setting out against him, he said to his friends, "What do you advise?" They said, "That you submit to her, for we are not powerful enough to compete with her and those with her." Then Musailamah said, "Let me consider my position." Then he took thought,—he was shrewd,—and he sent to her, saying, "You and I should meet at some place, to study together the revelation which has descended to us. Whichever (of us) is in the right, let the other follow him." She agreed to that, and Musailamah gave orders to pitch a leather tent, and in it was put much aloes wood, for, said he, "The woman, when she smells it, will think of sexual intercourse." Then he met her in the tent, deceived her and lay with her, after which she said, "Such as I do not do like this, but, when I go out, I will acknowledge that you are in the right, and do you ask my people for me in marriage, for they will marry me to you, then I will lead the Bani Tamim with you." When she came out, she said, "He read to me the revelation which descended to him, and I found it true, and I submit to him." Then he asked her  
 (52) in marriage, they married (her to) him, and her dowry was their being excused the late afternoon prayer.

105 They say also that the Bani Tamim of Ramla<sup>1</sup>, till to-day, do not pray the late afternoon prayer, saying, "This was the dowry of our noblest lady." When that

<sup>1</sup> Text reads RAML.

(news) reached Abu Bakr, he equipped an army against them, with Khalid, son of Walid, in command. They fought the fiercest combat the Moslems had seen, but, in the end, victory lay with the army of Islam, and Musailamah was killed. One of the major conquests was that of Syria. A description of how that came about (follows). In the year A.H. 13,—and that was the year of the death of Abu Bakr,—after Abu Bakr had returned from the pilgrimage, he began to prepare expeditions against Syria. He sent numerous troops, appointing a commander in charge of each 'division,' and he named a district for each commander, which was (to be) his, if he conquered it and got possession of it. Later he reinforced them with Khalid, son of Walid, and 10,000 men, so that the troops of the line in Syria totalled 46,000: Between them<sup>1</sup> ensued engagements and battles lasting till the death of Abu Bakr and the proclamation of 'Umar, son of al Khattab, who dismissed Khalid, son of Walid, from command of the army, to which he had been appointed, and who appointed Abu 'Ubaidah, son of al Jarrah, to command the troops. 'Umar's messenger to the army in Syria arrived with 'Umar's despatch to Abu 'Ubaidah concerning his appointment and Khalid's dismissal. The messenger's arrival coincided with their engagement in a battle, and the troops began to ask the messenger why he had come. He informed them that all was well, and  
 106 promised them that behind him were reinforcements for them. He hid from them Abu Bakr's death. Then he went to Abu 'Ubaidah, son of al Jarrah, informed him secretly of the death of Abu Bakr, and handed him 'Umar's despatch concerning his appointment and 'Umar's dismissal. Abu 'Abaidah was ashamed in the matter of Khalid and was unwilling to inform him of his dismissal, while he was exerting himself to the utmost in a battle. So Abu 'Ubaidah hid the news from Khalid, and waited till the victory was complete, when he wrote the despatch (announcing the victory) in Khalid's name. Then he informed him of Abu Bakr's death and his dismissal,

<sup>1</sup> i.e., Arabs and Byzantines.

and he (Khalid) handed over the army to him (Abu 'Ubaidah). The taking of Damascus occurred in A.H. 24, during the Caliphate of 'Umar, son of al Khattab. In (the time of) the above mentioned dynasty occurred the conquest of 'Iraq, and the seizure of power by the Arabs from the 'kings of Persia.' A description of the early stages of the transfer of power to the Arabs from 'the Persian kings.'

(58) God Most High, by His foreknowledge, extensive wisdom and the might of His power, when He wishes something prepares the means thereto, as He has described Himself in His Word : " Say, ' O God, Possessor of power, Thou givest power to whomsoever Thou wilt, and Thou takest power from whomsoever Thou wilt, Thou ennoblest whomsoever Thou wilt, and Thou abaset whomsoever Thou wilt. In Thy hand is the good ; in truth Thou hast power over everything '." When He wished to transfer power from the Persians to the Arabs, He caused warning signs of that by which fear filled their hearts and the hearts of their chiefs. The first of those  
107 were the shaking of the Palace ; the downfall of its battlements,—which occurred at the birth of the Prophet ;—and the extinction of the (sacred) fire of Faris,—which had not, previously, been extinguished for a thousand years. This occurred in the time of Anusharwan the Just, who, when he saw the fall of the battlements and the splitting of the Palace, was grieved thereat, assumed his crown, sat on his throne, summoned his ' ministers ' and consulted them about it. At that very moment arrived a despatch from Faris concerning the extinction of the fire, so that ' the Persian king ' redoubled his grief. At the same time the Mubadhan<sup>1</sup> rose and related a dream which he had dreamt, saying, " I saw,—long live the king,—as it were weak camels leading Arab horse, which had already crossed the Tigris and spread over its countryside." ' The Persian king ' said to him, " And what is the interpretation of that ? " He replied, " Long live the king. Something will happen from the direction of

<sup>1</sup> A Magian priestly official.



the Arabs." The talk about this spread amongst the Persians, and the people discussed it. Terror dwelt in their hearts, and fear of the Arabs was confirmed in their souls. Terrifying warnings similar to these followed in succession to the end. So Rustum, when he went to do battle with Sa'd, son of Abu Waqqas, dreamt as though an angel descended from the sky, collected the bows of the Persians, sealed them, and took them up to the sky. Conjoined with these was what they themselves saw of the Arabs' truth in speech, their self-confidence, and their great endurance in hardship and, later, the dissensions<sup>1</sup> which occurred towards the end, after the death of Shahriyar and the accession of Yazdajard,—a young boy of unsound judgment,—to the throne of the kingdom. Finally, the greatest calamity was the change of the wind against them at the battle of Qadisiyah, so that it blinded them with dust, and involved them in general ruin, in which Rustum was killed, and their army routed. Consider these terrifying phenomena and know that God's Decrees He brings to pass. A description of the fitting out of the army for 'Iraq and the seizure of power from the Persians. The Persian frontier was the most formidable frontier against the Arabs, the strongest, as they thought, and the most feared by them. They disliked raiding it and avoided it, —out of respect for the power of 'the Persian kings', and the well-known fact of the subjugation of (numerous) peoples by them,—till the end of Abu Bakr's time, when one of the Companions called Muthanna, son of Harithah, rose and invited the people to attack Persia. He minimised the matter to them and encouraged them to (undertake) it. A large number answered his invitation, and people recalled how the Messenger of God had promised them possession of the treasures of 'the Persian kings.' No decision on the matter was reached in the Caliphate of Abu Bakr, till the time of 'Umar, son of al Khattab, when Muthanna, son of Harithah, wrote to him informing him of the chaos in Persian affairs, of the accession to the throne of the kingdom of Yazdajard, son of Shahriyar,

<sup>1</sup> i.e., among the Persian themselves.

and of his youth,—he had ascended the throne at the age of eleven. Then the desire of the Arabs to raid Persia grew strong. 'Umar went out and made a camp outside Madinah, without people knowing whither he meant (to go). They did not dare to ask him anything till one of them asked him once for the time of departure. He rebuked him and did not tell him. When they were in a difficulty and had to get information from him, they used to seek the help of 'Uthman, son of 'Affan (to intercede) with him, or of 'Abd ar Rahman, son of 'Auf. If they were in great difficulty, they added 'Abbas as a third. 'Uthman said to 'Umar, "Commander of the Faithful, what news have you, and what do you intend?" 'Umar summoned to a public prayer, the people collected round him, he told them the news, addressed them, invited them to raid Persia, and minimised the matter to them. They all signified their readiness, then asked him to go with them himself. He said, "I will, unless there is a better idea than this." Then he sent to the men of sound judgment, and to the principal and most sensible Companions, summoned them and asked their advice. They advised him to stay and to send one of the principal Companions, so that he might be behind them forwarding reinforcements. If a victory occurred, well, that was the objective. If the man (appointed) died, he could send another. When they had agreed unanimously on this view, 'Umar ascended the pulpit,—if they wanted to speak to the people publicly, one of them used to ascend the pulpit, and address the people on what he intended. When 'Umar had ascended (it), he said, "Men, I intended to go with you, but the wise and sensible among you have turned me from this view, and advised me to remain and send one of the Companions to be in charge of the expedition. Then he asked their advice as to whom he should send. At that moment a despatch came to him from Sa'd, son of Abbu Waqqas, who was absent in one of the districts,<sup>1</sup> and they advised 'Umar to appoint Sa'd. They said, "He is a lion in attacking an enemy." The good opinion held of Sa'd,

<sup>1</sup> Or, in some employment.

(55) son of Abu Waqqas, by 'Umar, son of al Khattab, agreed with that, so he summoned him, put him in charge of the expedition to 'Iraq and handed over the army to him. Then Sa'd set out with the troops. 'Umar went with them some 'miles,' finally he addressed them, urged them to the Holy War, bade them farewell and went back to Madinah. Sa'd continued his journey and began to cross the desert between the Hijaz and Kufah, reconnoitring. 'Umar's messengers and despatches came to him with advice, and containing one plan after another. He also kept on reinforcing him with troops, till he made up his mind to attack Qadisiyah, which was the gate to the kingdom of Persia. When Sa'd occupied Qadisiyah, he and those with him needed provisions, so he sent out men with orders to bring in some sheep and cattle. But the inhabitants of the Sawad<sup>1</sup> had fled before them. Then they found a man and asked him for sheep and cattle, but he replied he knew of none, though he himself was a herdsman and had made the beasts enter a thicket thereabouts. They say that one of the oxen in it bellowed, giving the lie to the herdsman, "Here we are, in the thicket," so they entered it, drove a number out from it, and brought them to Sa'd. They took that as a good omen and accounted it divine help. Even if the ox did not utter actual words to give the lie to the herdsman, nevertheless its bellow at that moment so that, by its bellow, the beasts were indicated when the need was great, clearly gave the lie to the herdsman, and it was one of the amazing coincidences pointing to victory and empire. A good augury was necessarily drawn from it. When the news of Sa'd's arrival with his army reached the Persians, they summoned against him Rustum with 30,000 troops of the line. The Arab army was between 7 and 8,000 strong, with some later additions. They met, and the Persians laughed at the Arabs' arrows, likening them to spindles. Here is a place for an anecdote of the same kind which there will be no harm in quoting. Falak ad Din Muhammad, son of Aidamir, told me as

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the rich black soil of 'Iraq.

follows. "I was with the troops of the junior Secretary<sup>1</sup> when he went out to meet the Tartars to the west side of 'Baghdad,' in the great battle with them of the year 656. We met by the canal Bashir in the districts of the Little Tigris. One of our knights used to go out to single combat, mounted on an Arab horse, fully armed, as though he and his horse were a great mountain. There would come out against him from the Mongols a horseman mounted on a horse like a donkey, in his hand a spear  
 112 like a spindle, without clothes or arms. All who saw him laughed at him, but the day was not over before they made a charge and broke us completely. It was the beginning of the tragedy; afterwards events took their course." Then messengers went to and fro between Rustum and Sa'd. The desert Arab used to go to Rustum's door while he was sitting on his golden throne. For him  
 (56) had been thrown down cushions of gold tissue; and for him had been spread carpets of gold tissue. The Persians put on their crowns, displayed their gorgeous apparel, and stationed elephants at the edges of the audience room. Then would come the desert Arab, spear in hand, girt with his sword, his bow over his shoulder. He would picket his horse close to Rustum's throne. The Persians would cry out against him and intend to stop him, but Rustum would prevent them, and bring him near. He would walk up to him, leaning on his spear, pressing with it on those carpets and cushions, tearing them with the butt of his spear, while they were looking on. When he came to Rustum, he would reply to his conversation, and Rustum did not cease hearing from them saws and replies which frightened and terrified him. One thing was that Sa'd used to send each time a (different) messenger. Rustum said to one who was sent to him, "Why do they not send us our friend of yesterday." He replied, "Because our Commander acts fairly to us in both hard and easy matters." One day he said to another, "What is this spindle in your hand," meaning his spear. He replied, "Its lack (of size) does not harm a coal." Another time

<sup>1</sup> An officer of the household.

he said to another one, "What is the matter with your sword. It seems to me worn out." He replied, "The  
113 scabbard is old but the edge sharp!" What he saw of such things frightened Rustum, and he said to his friends, "Consider, for these men are either truthful or lying. If they are lying, a people that keeps its secrets so well, without contradiction; who have agreed together to hide their private affairs in such a way that not one of them reveals them, are a people of the greatest power and force. If they are truthful, no one will be able to stand against them." Then they cried out against him, saying, "Good Heavens, will you abandon your projects on account of something you have seen in these dogs?" "No; persist in fighting them." Rustum replied, "It is as I told you, but just as you like." Then they fought for several days, at the end of which the wind turned against them, so that the dust blinded them, Rustum was killed, the army routed, and their baggage taken. The Persians fled seeking fords across the Tigris to gain the east bank. Sa'd followed them, crossed the fords, made a further great slaughter of them at Jalula, took their baggage as booty and a daughter of 'the Persian king' as prisoner. Sa'd announced the victory to 'Umar, who at that time was most anxious about the affairs of the army. Daily he used to go to the outskirts of Madinah on foot to ask<sup>1</sup> for news, (to see) whether anyone had come who would tell him about them. The bringer of the good news of  
114 the victory from Sa'd arrived and 'Umar saw him. He said to him, "Whence have you come?" "From 'Iraq,"  
(57) he replied. He said, "What have Sa'd and the army done?" He answered, "God gave them a complete victory." The man was going on his she-camel with 'Umar walking at his stirrup, and he did not know that he was 'Umar. When the people collected and greeted 'Umar as Commander of the Faithful, the desert Arab recognised him and said to him, "Why did you not tell me that you were the Commander of the Faithful?" He replied, "You have done no wrong, my brother."

<sup>1</sup> Lit., sniff.

Then 'Umar wrote to Sa'd, "Stay where you are and do not follow them, be content with this, and choose for the Moslems a home in exile and a city they can inhabit. Put not a sea between me and them." Sa'd chose Kufah for them, and marked out a congregational mosque in it. The people marked out the houses, and Sa'd made it the capital city. Then he got control of Mada'in and possession of its treasures and stores. An account of some amusing incidents that occurred at this time. One was that a certain Arab got hold of a leather sack of camphor. He brought it to his friends and they thought it was salt. They cooked food, put some camphor in it and perceived no taste to it. They did not know what it was. Then a man saw them, knew what was in it and bought it from them for an old shirt worth two dirhams. Another was that a desert Arab got a great jacinth worth a vast sum, but he did not know its value. One who knew its value saw him, and bought it from him for 1,000 dirhams. Later the desert Arab realised its value, and his friends blamed him, saying to him, "Why did you not ask more than that for it?" He replied, "Had I known that, after 1,000, there was a number bigger than 1,000, I would have asked it." Another was that one of them took in his hand some gold, and said, "Who will take this yellow (stuff) and give me white?" He thought that silver was more valuable than gold. An account of what happened to Yazdajard. Yazdajard then fled to Khurasan and his affairs kept deteriorating till he was killed in the year A.H. 31 in Khurasan. He was the last of the kings of 'the Sassanid dynasty.' In the above-mentioned dynasty,<sup>1</sup> the 'registers' were established and pay was allocated to the Moslems who, formerly, did not know what a 'register' was. A description of how the 'registers' were established. The Moslems were an army, and they fought for the faith, not for mundane ends. There was never lacking amongst them those who would expend a good part of their property in (various) forms of good deeds and pious works. For their faith and support of the Prophet, they wished no

<sup>1</sup> i.e., of "the four."

- (58) reward except from God Most High. Neither the Prophet nor Abu Bakr allocated to them any fixed pay, but if they raided and obtained booty, they took the share of the spoil fixed for them by the Canon Law. If any wealth came to Madinah from some other land, it was brought to the Prophet's mosque and divided amongst them as he saw fit. So matters continued during the
- 116 Caliphate of Abu Bakr. But in A.H. 25, in the Caliphate of 'Umar, he saw that the conquests continued one after another, that the treasures of 'the Persian kings' had been seized, and that imports of gold, silver, precious jewels, and splendid clothes followed in succession, and he decided to benefit the Moslems and to divide this wealth among them. But he did not know how to do it nor how to arrange this. There was, in Madinah, a Persian 'satrap,' who, when he saw the perplexity of 'Umar, said to him, "Commander of the Faithful, the 'Persian kings' had something they called a 'register,' in which their total revenue and expenditure was set out with no omissions. The recipients of pay were arranged by grades into which no error crept." 'Umar was interested, and said, "Describe it to me," and the 'satrap' described it. 'Umar understood it, organised the 'registers,' and allocated pay. To each single Moslem he gave a fixed grade.<sup>1</sup> He allocated pensions to the wives of the Prophet, to his concubines, and to his relations; till he exhausted the receipts and left no reserve in the Treasury. They say that a man came to him and said, "Commander of the Faithful, will you not leave something in the Treasuries as a reserve for any emergency which may arise?" But 'Umar rebuked him, saying, "(This is) a word which Satan has put in your mouth, may God preserve me from harm by it. It would be a temptation to those after me. I will put nothing to reserve against any emergency that
- 117 may arise, save obedience to God and His messenger. That is our reserve, thanks to which we have reached as far as we have." Next, 'Umar decided to allocate pay according to precedence in the faith, and to assistance

<sup>1</sup> But Amar translates "somme."

given to the Messenger on his battlefields and in his wars. Then he appointed scribes to keep the 'registers,' ordering them to arrange the categories and draw up the (rates of) pay. They said, "with whom shall we begin, Commander of the Faithful? It is right to put you first." 'Umar disliked that and said, "Begin with 'Abbas, uncle of the Messenger of God, and the Bani Hashim, then with those after them, category by category, and put the family of Khattab where God put them." Action was taken on his advice, and so matters continued during his

(59) Caliphate and that of 'Uthman. But the latter at the end of his Caliphate had the idea of altering this plan and allocating to each single Moslem 4,000 (dirhams). He said, "He can use 1,000 for the expenses of his family, when he goes on active service; with 1,000 he can equip himself; 1,000 he will take with him; and with 1,000 he can 'pay a companion in arms'."

'Umar died before the completion of this plan. One of its<sup>1</sup> famous battles was the battle of the camel, a description of the beginning and course of which (follows). When 'Uthman, son of 'Affan died, the people collected together, went to the house of the Commander of the Faithful, 'Ali, and asked him to become their leader. He refused them, saying, "I do not want to be your leader," but they

118 urged him emphatically, and collected to him from all sides, asking him this, till he consented, and the people took the oath of allegiance to him. Then he lived amongst them righteously, and, with respect to God, no 'possible' blame attaches to him. His activity and his rest were entirely (devoted) to God, in them he did not implement the interests of any individual. He neither took nor gave save in equity and justice, so much so that his brother 'Aqil, the own son of his father and mother, asked for something irregularly from the Treasury, and he refused him, saying, "My brother, you have no claims on the Treasury apart from what I have given you. But wait patiently, till my revenues come in, when I will give you from them what you want." This answer did not please

<sup>1</sup> i.e., of "the dynasty of the four."



'Aqil, who left him and went to Mu'awiyah in Syria. He used not to give his two sons, Hasan and Husain, more than their due. Consider a man whose piety led him to such conduct in respect of his two children and his brother by the same parents. But living like this among them, his (upright) deeds displeased some of the people, and they disliked (living in the same) place with him. Zubair and Talhah left for Meccah after they had acknowledged him. 'Aishah, the wife of the Messenger, was in Meccah, whither she had gone during the nights 'Uthman, son of 'Affan, was besieged. They two agreed with her in disliking the rule of 'Ali, and in seeking vengeance for the blood of 'Uthman. They accused 'Ali of exciting the people against 'Uthman, and of encouraging them to kill him. But 'Ali had always been one of 'Uthman's greatest  
 119 helpers and protectors. 'Uthman kept seeking his protection to keep the people off him, and he strove in the most laudable way to do so. At the end, when 'Uthman  
 (60) was besieged, 'Ali sent his son Hasan to help 'Uthman. (About this) he said, "Hassan wanted to fight on 'Uthman's behalf, but 'Uthman used to ask him to refrain, conjuring him not to risk his life in his support." But Talhah was one of those who gave most aid against 'Uthman, as witness all the histories. Aishah had already left Madinah for Meccah, during the nights 'Uthman, son of 'Affan, was besieged, then she returned from Meccah to Madinah, and one of her maternal uncles met her on the road and she said to him "What (news) whence you have come?" He replied, "'Uthman has been killed." She said, "What have the people done after that?" He answered, "They have taken the oath of allegiance to 'Ali." She replied, "May this (sky) fall on this (earth) if the power really comes to your friend!" Then she went back to Meccah and used to say, "'God knows,' 'Uthman was wrongly killed and that I will surely seek vengeance for his blood." A man said to her, "Why? For you were the first to speak against him. It was you who used to say, 'Kill Na'thal, for he has become an infidel.'" [That

<sup>1</sup> i.e., 'Ali.

was a nickname for 'Uthman.] She replied, "They asked him to repent, then killed him. I spoke and they spoke, but my last statement was better than my first." When she returned to Meccah, she made common cause with Zubair and Talhah as we have mentioned, to seek  
 120 vengeance for the blood of 'Uthman, and in discontent with the leadership of 'Ali. Marwan, son of Hakam, who was the son of the paternal uncle of 'Uthman, also made common cause with them. They said to the people, "A mob made up of inhabitants of the (Provincial) capitals and slaves of the inhabitants of Madinah have collected together against this miserable man [meaning 'Uthman,] killed him unjustly and wrongfully, and spilled sacred blood, in the sacred region, in the sacred month." Then they won over the people and determined to go to Basrah and win its inhabitants, to strengthen themselves by them for the struggle with 'Ali. When that reached 'Ali, he rose, addressed the people and informed them of the state of affairs. He said, "It is a civil war, and I shall retain the power so long as I retain my hand." Then (the news of) their collecting together and determination on making war reached him, and he attacked them with an army of the Refugees and the Helpers. 'Aishah, when making for Basrah, passed by a well called al Hawab, where the dogs barked at her. She said to the guide, "What is the name of this place?" He replied, "al-Hawab." Then she cried out at the top of her voice, saying, "Take me back : "We are God's, and to him do we return"; I heard the Messenger of God say to his wives, "At which of you will bark the dogs of Al Hawab?" Then she determined to go back, but they said to her, "The  
 121 guide lied and he does not know the place," adding, "If you do not move on from this place, then 'Ali, son of Abu Talib, will overtake you at it and you will perish." So she went on her way, so, too, 'Ali, and the two parties met outside Basrah. There occurred engagements and  
 (61) skirmishes, in one of which he met Talhah and Zubair. 'Ali said to Talhah, "Talhah, do you seek vengeance for the blood of 'Uthman,—may God curse his murderers?"

Talhah, have you brought the wife of the Messenger of God to fight alongside her, while you have left your own wife at home? Did you not take the oath of allegiance to me?" "He said, I did take the oath but under duress."<sup>1</sup> 'Ali said to Zubair, "Zubair, what has brought you out?" He replied, "You; for I do not think you worthy of this (position of) power, and none deserves it more than we." 'Ali replied, "We used to account you one of the children of 'Abd al Muttalib till your bad son,—'Abd Allah, son of Zubair,—came and parted us." Then 'Ali mentioned (several) things, and said to him, "Do you remember when the Messenger of God said, 'You will surely fight against him, and you will be in the wrong?'" He answered, "Indeed, yes; had I remembered it, I would not have started on this journey. I will never fight against you, surely." Then "'Ali' went away to his friends, and said, 'Zubair has already 'promised' not to fight against you.'" Zubair determined to abandon the war, but his son, 'Abd Allah, deceived him, and he did not leave him alone till he had expiated his oath,<sup>2</sup> and he fought. When the two parties were face to face, the troops of 'Aishah, Talhah and Zubair came to 30,000, and those of 'Ali 20,000. Before battle was joined, 'Ali' exhorted them, invited them to a peaceful settlement and made them generous offers of everything not derogatory to the Faith. They inclined somewhat to a peaceful settlement, and so spent the night. Then, in the morning, battle was joined between the two sides, and attacks and engagements ensued, leading to victory by the army of 'Ali.' But when Zubair saw that the victory was against them,<sup>3</sup> he turned his horse's head and went off. An Arab of Basrah, and 'Umair, son of Jurmuz, followed him and killed him in the "valley of wild beasts." He brought his sword to 'Ali, and said to the chamberlain, "Announce the slayer of Zubair." But 'Ali said, "Congratulate the slayer of the son of Safiyyah on the Fire."<sup>4</sup> Safiyyah was the mother of Zubair,

<sup>1</sup> Lit., with the sword over my neck.

<sup>2</sup> i.e., by one of the legal alternatives.

<sup>3</sup> i.e., his men.

<sup>4</sup> i.e., of Hell, earned by this deed.

and the paternal aunt of 'Ali.' When he saw the sword, he said, "How often has (this) sword dispelled cares from the face of the Messenger of God." A stray arrow hit Talhah in the foot, and killed him. He entered Basrah mounted behind his servant. Blood had filled his boot, and he was saying, "God, take from me in payment for 'Uthman till you are satisfied." He died in one of the ruined compounds of Basrah. To-day, in Basrah, his grave is one of the sanctuaries visited by them. If one afraid or an exile takes refuge at it no one, whoever he

(62) may be, dares to fetch him out from it. Even to-day, the people of Basrah have great faith in Talhah. It is said also that the slayer of Talhah was Marwan, son of Hakam. 'Aishah was on camel back in a litter, which had been

128 covered with hauberks and chain mail. When the fighting grew fierce and her party fled, the camel was hamstrung and fell. Her litter was lifted and carried to a place distant from the people. Her brother, Muhammad, son of Abu Bakr, was on 'Ali's side. He was also the son of 'Ali's wife Asma, daughter of 'Umais. 'Ali ordered him to go to his sister and see if she were safe, or if any wound had befallen her. He went to her, saw she was safe, then took her into Basrah by night. Then 'Ali allowed the people to bury the slain,—amounting to 10,000 on both sides,—ordered that the spoils be collected, brought them into the cathedral mosque of Basrah, and made proclamation to the people that whoever recognised any of his own kit might take it. He behaved well by 'Aishah, fitted her out with all needful to one of her station, allowed her to return to Madinah, sent with her all of those who had gone out<sup>1</sup> with her who had escaped, save those who preferred to remain, chose for her forty well-known women from the wives of the inhabitants of Basrah to escort her on the road, and sent with her, out of respect and courtesy, her brother Muhammad, son of Abu Bakr. On the day of departure, 'Ali and the people came, and 'Aishah said, "My dear son," [She spoke thus because the wives of the Prophet are the mothers of the Faithful, as

<sup>1</sup> i.e., from Madinah originally.

- <sup>124</sup> God Most High and His Messenger have said], "Let us not recriminate one another. There was nothing between me and 'Ali formerly save that which is between a woman and her in-laws. He, despite my fault-finding, is one of the best." 'Ali said, "She has spoken the truth, there was nothing between me and her save that, and she is the wife of your Prophet in this world and the hereafter." Then she went on her way, and he escorted her for (several) miles, and sent his children with her for a day's journey. She went to Meccah, stayed there till the days of the Pilgrimage, performed the Pilgrimage, and went back to Madinah. The battle of the Camel was in the year A.H. 36. Another of their famous battles was that of
- (68) Siffin, of which a description follows. When "'Ali' returned from the battle of the Camel, he sent to Mu'awiyah to acquaint him of the agreement of the people in taking the oath of allegiance to him, to inform him about the battle of the camel, and to order him to do the same as the Refugees and the Helpers. Mu'awiyah was Governor of Syria, an appointment by 'Uthman whose cousin he was. When 'Ali's messenger came to Mu'awiyah, Mu'awiyah feared 'Ali, and he knew that, when his authority was established, he would depose him, and not employ him officially. The son of 'Abbas and al Mughirah, son of Shu'bah, had already advised "'Ali' to confirm Mu'awiyah in Syria for a while, till the people had taken the oath of allegiance and he was in power, then to depose him after that. But he did not listen to them, and said, "If I were to confirm him in his governorship, even for a single day, I would, for that day, be disobedient to God Most High. Craft and deceit were not 'Ali's way, his was only the stark truth. When the Messenger came to Mu'awiyah, he put him off, and consulted 'Amr, son of al'As, a shrewd man. Mu'awiyah had already become intimate with him and had won him over to strengthen himself by his sound judgment and shrewdness. 'Amr, son of al'As, advised Mu'awiyah to display the bloody shirt, in which 'Uthman, son of 'Affan, was killed, also the fingers of his wife, to hang them on the pulpit, then to collect the people, weep

for him, ascribe the murder of 'Uthman to 'Ali, and to seek vengeance against the latter for the former's blood, so that the Syrians might take his part and fight on his side. So Mu'awiyah brought out the shirt and the fingers and hung them on the pulpit, wept, made the people weep, and reminded them of what had befallen 'Uthman. The Syrians answered the summons from every side, emphatically volunteered to help him in seeking vengeance for the blood of 'Uthman, and to fight on his behalf against all who sheltered his murderers. Mu'awiyah wrote a letter to 'Ali in which he related this, and then 'Ali prepared for war. He wrote to the people (telling them) to rally round him, and Mu'awiyah did the same. They met at Siffin in the province of Syria. Skirmishes and engagements occurred between them, the earliest of which was that Mu'awiyah and his supporters reached first the path to water and controlled it, debarring 'Ali's supporters from watering. There was no other path to the water except it. When 'Ali was informed of this, he sent to Mu'awiyah a messenger to say to him, "One of our principles is that we should not start to fight you, until we have occasion against you. We will consider what we have come to do, and do you consider, too. Your supporters have already debarred people from watering, so send (them orders) to leave the way to the water open. But, if you wish us to abandon our (real) objective, and our battle to be on account of the water so that the victor (alone) shall drink, then we will act (accordingly). Mu'awiyah said to his supporters, "What do you advise?" Some of the Bani Umayyah said, "We think you should debar them from watering till they die of thirst, or return to seek water, then there will be a rout." 'Amr, son of al 'As, said, "I think that you should leave the way to water open for them; others should not thirst while you have water." Mu'awiyah postponed answering, and said, "I will consider." But the people fought about the water; Ali reinforced his supporters and Mu'awiyah reinforced his supporters, battle was joined and the struggle grew fierce. 'Ali's

supporters took possession of the path and wanted to debar Mu'awiyah's supporters (from watering), but 'Ali sent to them, saying "Take as much water as you need, and do not debar them from it." Matters continued thus for a while, till 'Ali's troops almost won, and the signs of victory approached. 'Amr, son of al'As, feared a disaster, and advised Mu'awiyah to lift Korans on spears, and to appeal to God's orders contained therein. When the Korans were lifted, most of the people slackened in the battle, came to 'Ali and said, "'Ali, obey the book of God. If you do not, we will carry you to Mu'awiyah by force, or we will surely do to you as we did to the son of 'Affan.'" 'Ali replied to them, "Men, it is a trick of theirs. None of them acts according to this Koran." "Are not you (acting) on a clear proof from your Lord?"<sup>1</sup> Complete your business and fight against your enemies." But they did not do so and overcame him, so he assented to abandoning the struggle and then sent to Mu'awiyah, a messenger to ask. "What do you want by lifting up these Korans?" He replied, "Let us appoint as arbiters one man of ours and one man of yours, and we will make the two men swear to advise the community wisely, and to work according to the book of God. That which they find not in the book of God, let them refer to the practice of the community and to consensus of opinion. Anything they two adjudicate, we will accept. All the people were pleased with this, except 'Ali,' who assented unwillingly and perforce, together with a small band of his intimates, such as Ashtar, the son of 'Abbas and some others. Common consent agreed to appoint two men as arbiters. The Syrians agreed that their arbiter should be 'Amr, son of al'As, the shrewdest of the Arabs. The men of 'Iraq wanted Abu Musa al Ash'ari, who was a careless dotard. 'Ali' did not approve of him for the arbitration; and said, "If we needs must have an arbitration, then let me send 'Abd Allah, son of 'Abbas." They replied, "No, indeed, he is you and you are he." Then he suggested al Ashtar, but they replied, "Has anyone

<sup>1</sup> Koran 6 v. 158.

- 128 set the earth ablaze but Ashtar ? ” He said, “ You refuse in advance (everyone) except Abu Musa ? ” They replied, “ Yes. ” He said, “ Then do as you like. ” So the people agreed on Abu Musa and 'Amr, son of al 'As. They two agreed to adjourn for some months, the battle died down, and the people went back to their (Provincial) capitals. Mu'awiyah returned to Syria, and ' 'Ali' to 'Iraq. After some months, the two arbiters met to confer at Dumat al Jandal, which was the place appointed by the two arbiters. Many of the Companions came to witness that meeting. ' 'Ali' had sent to accompany his supporters, 'Abd Allah, son of 'Abbas. When the two arbiters met together, 'Amr, son of al 'As, said to Abu Musa al Ash'ari, “ Abu Musa, do you not know that 'Uthman was wrongfully murdered ? ” He replied, “ I bear witness (to that). ” He said, “ Do you not know that Mu'awiyah and Mu'awiyah's family are his relations ? ” He replied, “ Yes. ” 'Amr said, “ Then what keeps you away from him, seeing that his family is in the Quraish (of standing) as you know ? If you fear lest people say, “ He has no precedence (in Islam, ) ” reply, “ I have found him (to be) a relation of 'Uthman the wronged Caliph, the seeker of vengeance for his blood, a good statesman and administrator, a brother of the mother of Habibah a wife of the Prophet, his secretary and his companion. ” 'Amr hinted to Abu Musa at a governorship and promised him (various) things as from Mu'awiyah, but Abu Musa refused and said, “ Heaven forbid that I should put Mu'awiyah into power or that I should accept a bribe in a sacrosant arbitration. ” Then 'Amr said to him, “ What do you say about my son, 'Abd Allah ? ” 'Amr, son of al 'As,
- 129 had a son named 'Abd Allah, one of the best of the Companions. But Abu Musa rejected him, and said to 'Amr, “ You have plunged him together with yourself into this civil war, but what do you think of reviving the name of 'Umar, son of al Khattab ? ” He invited him (to consider)
- (66) 'Abd Allah, son of 'Umar. But 'Amr refused, and, when they did not agree, 'Amr said to him, “ Abu Musa, what then is your opinion ? ” Abu Musa replied, “ My



opinion is that we should depose 'Ali and Mu'awiyah from power, give the people rest from this civil war, and leave a public matter for a council, so that the Moslems may choose as their ruler him on whom they agree." 'Amr replied, "Your opinion is sound, and I am with you in that." A chance for trickery appeared to 'Amr, who had accustomed Abu Musa al Ash'ari to speak before him. He used to say to him, "You are a Companion of the Messenger of God, and the elder." So Abu Musa was accustomed to speak before 'Amr, and Abu Musa came forward and said, "I and 'Amr have agreed on something which we hope will be to the advantage of the Moslems." Then 'Amr came and forward and said, "He has spoken truly and rightly. Come forth, Abu Musa, and tell the people that on which we have agreed." Then the son of 'Abbas rose and said to Abu Musa, "Woe to you! I think that he has already tricked you, and has made you believe in his agreement with you in what you wish, then has made you precede him to acknowledge it, and, when you have acknowledged it, he will deny it, for he is a deceitful man. If you two have agreed on anything, make him come forward first to say it before you." Then Abu Musa said, "We have already agreed," adding, "We have agreed to depose 'Ali and Mu'awiyah, and to leave a public matter of the Moslems for a Council, so that they can choose him on whom they agree. I hereby depose 'Ali and Mu'awiyah from the Caliphate, as a ring is stripped from the finger." Then 'Amr, son of al 'As, came forward and said, "Men, you have heard what he said and that he deposed his leader, whom, I, too, have deposed in concert with him, but I confirm my own leader, Mu'awiyah." Abu Musa denied (this) and said, "He is a deceiver and a liar, and it was not this on which we agreed." But the people did not listen to him and dispersed. 'Amr, son of al 'As, and the Syrians went to Mu'awiyah and saluted him as Caliph; the son of 'Abbas and the partisans of 'Ali went to him and informed him of what had passed. As for Abu Musa, the Syrians attacked him, and he fled to Meccah. Thus ended the affair of Siffin, which began

in the year A.H. 36, and finished in the year A.H. 37. An account of the 'dissenters,' the trouble they caused and of their ultimate position. When the affair of the arbitration had happened in the manner described, those who had advised the arbitration and forced 'Ali to accept it, subsequently repented of it and came in haste to 'him,' saying, "The only arbitration is God's." 'Ali said 'the same.' They replied, "Then why did you appoint as arbitrators men?" He said, "I was dissatisfied with the decision to arbitrate, you were the ones pleased with it. I informed  
 181 you it was a trick on the part of the Syrians, and ordered you to fight your enemies among them, but you refused (anything) except arbitration, and you overbore my opinion. When there was no escape from arbitration, I 'played for  
 (67) safety,' and imposed as a condition on the two arbiters that they should act in accordance with the Book of God, that they should make live what the Book has made live, and make die what it has made die. But they disagreed, contradicted the Book of God, and acted wantonly. We are of our first opinion as to fighting them." The 'dissenters' answered, "There is no doubt that, in the first instance, we were satisfied with the arbitration, but we have repented of it and know that we sinned. If you admit your own impiety and seek pardon from God for your sin, your negligence and your appointment of men as arbiters, we will return with you to fight your enemies and our enemies, but, if not, we will leave you." He addressed them with every kind of argument, and tried in every way to make them see sense, but they did not withdraw and gathered into communities of Basrans, Kufans, and others, then made for Nahruwan. Their idea was to go to one of the fortified cities, fortify themselves in it and 'to use it as a base of operations.' Contradictory deeds for which 'they were responsible,' indicate that they 'had as little sense of direction'<sup>1</sup> as a blind camel. One was that a ripe date fell from a palm tree, a man picked it up and put it in his mouth. They said to him, "Have you eaten it unjustly, and have you taken it without payment?"

<sup>1</sup> Lit., beat about, stumble.

Then he threw it away. Another was that a pig belonging to a villager passed them, and one of them struck it with his sword, hamstringing it. They said, "This is disorder in the earth,"<sup>1</sup> so the man went to the pig's owner and gave him satisfaction. Another was that they used to take life, which is forbidden without due cause. They killed 'Abd Allah, son of Khattab, one of the senior Companions. They also killed a hummer of women, took prisoners and did many deeds of this kind. When (news of) their affairs reached 'Ali, he had already addressed the Kufans and summoned them to fight the Syrians and to renew the war as at first. They replied, "Commander of the Faithful, how can we go and leave these 'dissenters' behind us among our families and properties. Take us against them, and, when we have finished fighting them, we will return to fight our enemies among the Syrians. So he took the people against the 'dissenters,' met them at Nahruwan and destroyed them. It was as though it was said to them "Die," then they died. A miracle of 'Ali's. When he met the 'dissenters' at Nahruwan, they fled before him in the direction of the bridge. People thought that they would cross the bridge, and said to 'Ali, "Commander of the Faithful, they have crossed the bridge, attack them before they go far." 'He' replied, "They have not crossed, for the place where they will fall is this side of the bridge. Indeed not ten of you will be killed and not ten of them will survive." The people disbelieved what he said, but, when they overlooked the bridge, they saw they had not crossed. "'Ali's' men raised the 'Moslem battlecry' and said, "It is as you said, Commander of the Faithful?" He replied, "Yes, indeed, I lied not, nor am I given the lie." When the battle was over and the fighting died down, the dead on (68) 'Ali's side were counted. They came to seven. As for 133 the 'dissenters' a party of them went away before battle was joined. They said, "We know of no reason why we should fight against 'Ali, son of Abu Talib. We will go to one side till we see the upshot of the affair." The

<sup>1</sup> Common Koranic quotation.

remainder held firm, fought and all perished. Then 'Ali,' when the affair of the 'dissenters' had come to an end, returned to Kufah, and summoned the people to fight against the Syrians. They made heavy weather of it, he reiterated his demands on them, addressed them and urged them to the holy war. They replied, "Commander of the Faithful, our swords are blunt, our arrows exhausted and we are tired of war. Give us a respite to put our affairs in order and then we will proceed." He had encamped, outside Kufah; he gave them a respite and told them to dispose themselves for war. He forbade them to have intercourse with their wives till they returned from Syria, but they began slipping away and entering Kufah, till their camp was empty. So his plan came to nought, and this was in the year 38. The death of the four. The death of Abu Bakr. Abu Bakr was the first of them to die. He died a natural death, at Madinah, in the year 13. His illness was (due to) the breaking open of the bite of the snake which bit him during the night of the Cave. He was buried by the side of the Prophet in the room of 'Aishah, his daughter whom the Messenger married. When the Messenger was taken, 4 he was taken in her room, and Abu Bakr was buried by him. He made 'Umar, son of al Khattab, his heir, and nominated him as his successor in charge of the community after him. The murder of 'Umar, son of al Khattab. When 'Umar, son of al Khattab, imposed the 'general tax,' Abu Lu'lu'ah, a slave of Mughirah, son of Shu'bah, was enraged at it, because he had imposed the tax on his master. 'Umar, son of al Khattab, had met Abu Lu'lu'ah, and said to him, "Make me a mill." Abu Lu'lu'ah replied, "I will surely make you a mill that will revolve for ever." 'Umar said, "The slave threatens me." Then he<sup>1</sup> speared him<sup>2</sup> as he was at prayer. He<sup>2</sup> survived for three days, then died and was buried in the grave of the Prophet. That was in the year A.H. 23. The people collected together against (69) Abu Lu'lu'ah. He killed a number of them, then was

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the slave. <sup>2</sup> i.e., 'Umar.

taken and put to death. An account of the council, and a description of what happened about it. When 'Umar was speared, the people collected round him, and asked him as to who should succeed him in charge of the community. His opinion was not certain as to any one man, so he left it to six of the senior Companions. They were the members of the Council,—'Ali, 'Uthman, son of 'Affan, Talhah, Zubair, 'Abd ar Rahman, son of 'Auf, and Sa'd, son of Abu Waqqas, Saying, "Each one of these is fit to rule after me," he ordered them to deliberate together for three days, then to agree on one of these six. Talhah was absent, and 'Uthman said, "If Talhah comes before the three days (are up, very well;) if not, finish your business." He set over them one of the Helpers, saying, "Through you, has God strengthened Islam. Choose fifty men from the Helpers, and urge on this band till they choose a man," adding, "If five agree and approve one of them, but one refuses, then 'strike off'<sup>1</sup> his head with a sword. If four agree and two refuse, strike off their two heads. If three of them approve one man and three another, then appoint 'Abd Allah, son of 'Umar (meaning his own son), as arbiter, and with whichever of the two parties he casts his vote, let them choose that party's man." He had already ordered his son to be present at that session as a consultant, but gave him nothing (else to do) in the matter. "If you do not (agree to) choose according to the arbitration of 'Abd Allah son of 'Umar, then be on the side of those amongst whom is 'Abd ar Rahman, son of 'Auf, and kill the remainder, if they wish other than that on which the people have agreed." Nothing of 'Umar's proposals came to pass, but, when he died, the oath of allegiance was taken to 'Uthman, son of 'Affan, and events took their course. The murder of 'Uthman, son of 'Affan, and its reason. Some Moslems rebuked him for his deviation from the path of economy and 'integrity with regard to the public purse' (followed) by his two friends Abu Bakr and 'Umar. For he had already apportioned large sums

<sup>1</sup> Lit., knock in.

from it to his relations, and benefited his household and his family. Amongst many such deeds was his giving 'Abd Allah, son of Khalid, son of Usayyid, 50,000 dirhams, and his giving Marwan, son of Hakam, 15,000. The Moslems were not accustomed to such extravagance. Their time was close to the strict administration of Abu Bakr and 'Umar, and they disliked this. Recriminations and discussions took place between them and him. He excused himself to them with the plea that Abu Bakr and 'Umar deprived themselves and their families 'for God's sake,' and waived their due share. "But I have a household, I stretched forth my hand and benefited (70) myself and my family with a little of this wealth. If you are displeased with this, then my desire is to conform to yours." They replied, "Whether you have done rightly or justly, you have given 'Abd Allah, son of Khalid, 50,000, and Marwan 15,000." He said, "I will make both of them pay that back," and he tried to get back what he had given them both. When they blamed him for decisions to which Marwan, son of Hakam, had impelled him and which he had recommended to him, sometimes he excused himself and took action according to advice they gave him, at other times he argued. The matter spread abroad, and the inhabitants of the (Provincial) capitals collected to make war on him. Egyptians and people from every country collected together and determined to kill him. He went out by night, came to 'Ali and said, "Nephew, you have obligations to me and I have come to you. You have a position with these men and they will accept what you say. You have seen their boldness against me. Go out to them and keep them off me." 'Ali mounted, and kept the people off him, guaranteed to them his (future) good conduct and they went away. Then matters became difficult, and Marwan, son of Hakam, recommended to him decisions of which the people disapproved. They gathered together against him from every side, surrounded him and besieged him in his house. He sent to 'Ali and sought his help. ('Ali) sent to him his son Hasan, who fought so well on

his behalf that he himself tried to restrain him. But (Hasan) fought on for him and risked his life to protect him. His opponents increased in number, broke into his house, and struck him down with swords, while he was fasting, with a Koran in his lap, from which he was reading. The Koran fell in front of him, and blood dropped on it. His wife Na'ilah rose to ward off the blows from him with her hand. The sword hit her fingers and severed them. Those were the fingers which Mu'awiyah hung on the pulpit in Damascus, together with 'Uthman's shirt, to stir the people to pity by them. The woman turned, dazed, and the man who had hit her felt her behind, saying, "She has a big behind." Then 'Uthman was murdered, and they cut off his head. His wives fell on him, crying and weeping. One of them<sup>1</sup> said, "Let him be," and they left him. Then one of the Kufans, called 'Umair, son of Dabi' al Burjumiyyu, trod on his ribs and broke them. His house was sacked, even what was on the women being taken. Then, after some days, he was carried in a coffin to be buried. A crowd sat by the road wishing to stone him, but 'Ali sent to them and prevented them doing that. He was buried near 'the cemetery.' Afterwards, Mu'awiyah bought the neighbourhood of his grave, included it with the graves of the Moslems, and allowed people to bury round him. This was in the year A.H. 35. The day of his murder was called the day of the house, because they broke in on him in his house and murdered him in it. The assassination of 'Ali.' It is transmitted from a number of sources that 'Ali' used continually to say, "What could stop the worst of you dyeing this with that," meaning his beard with blood from his head. Also, when he saw 'Abd ar Rahman, son of Muljam, he used to quote :

"I wanted his life,<sup>2</sup> and he my death,—(this is) your excuse<sup>3</sup> for (wrong done to) your (false) friend Murabi."

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the assailants.

<sup>2</sup> Reading حياة for حياء of text.

<sup>3</sup> Keeping text's nominative, which seems to give a possible meaning though Amar prefers the accusative.

People used to say to him when he spoke thus, "Commander of the Faithful, why do you not kill him?" He used to reply, "How can I kill one who will kill me?" This indicates that the Messenger of God taught him this. This (view) is confirmed by what is related on the authority of Anas, son of Malik, who said, "'Ali was sick and I went in to visit him. With him were Abu Bakr and 'Umar. We sat with him for a while. The Messenger of God came to him and looked into his face. Abu Bakr said to him, "Prophet of God, we think him surely dying." 139 He replied, "He will not die now, nor will he die till he is filled with grief,<sup>1</sup> nor otherwise than by assassination." 'Ali used always to treat the son of Muljam well. They say that, in the month of Ramadan in the year 40, 'Ali used to break his fast one evening at Hassan's, the next at Husain's, and then at his nephew's,—'Abd Allah, son of Ja'far at Tayyar. When he ate, he did not exceed three mouthfuls, saying, "In a night or two, the decree of God will arrive." Only a few nights passed before he was assassinated. It is also said that he was assassinated in the month of Rabi' the second, but the former (account) is the better and the usually accepted. The manner of his assassination was that he went out of his compound in Kufah at early dawn, and began to call a prayer, "May God have mercy on you." Then the son of Muljam struck him with a sword on the top of his head, saying "The decision belongs to God not to you, 'Ali." The people shouted, and the son of Muljam fled. "'Ali' said, "Let not the man escape you." The people ran at him and took him. 'Ali appointed as deputy for the morning (72) prayer one of his friends, and he was taken into his compound. He said, "Bring the man to me." When he was brought to him he said, "Enemy of God, have I not treated you well?" He replied, "Yes." ('Ali) said, "Then what drove you to this?" He answered, "I sharpened it for forty days, and I asked God to kill with it the worst of his creatures." "'Ali' said, "I think you will certainly be killed with it, and I think that you are

<sup>1</sup> Or anger, i.e., reasons for it.



certainly the worst of God's creatures," adding, "A life for a life. If I die, kill him as he killed me. If I survive, I will consider his case. Children of 'Abd al Muttalib do not assemble from all sides, saying, 'Ali' has been assassinated'; no-one is to be put to death on my account save my murderer." Then he turned to his son Hasan, and said, "See, Hasan, if I die through this blow, then deal him a blow for a blow. Do not mutilate the man, for I heard the Messenger of God say, "Do not mutilate even if it be a mad<sup>1</sup> dog." Then he charged his children to fear God Most High, to observe the prayers at their correct time, to pay tithe when it fell due, to perform thoroughly the ceremonial ablutions, to forgive sin, to restrain anger, to be kind to blood relations, to be courteous to the ignorant, to study religion, to be accurate in affairs, to read regularly the Koran, to deal kindly with neighbours, to order what is just and forbid what is disliked, and to eschew vices. He then wrote his will and only said, "There is no God but God," till was taken. When he was taken, Hassan sent to the son of Muljam, and had him brought. He said to Hassan, "Will you agree to a 'deal'? I have vowed to God that I will conclude no agreement till I have fulfilled it. I vowed to God at the wall of the Ka'abah to kill 'Ali and Mu'awiyah, or to die before them. So let me have a chance against Mu'awiyah, to go and kill him. I solemnly promise you that, if I do not kill him, or, if I kill him and escape, I will come to you to put my hand in your hand."<sup>2</sup> Hassan said, "Certainly not before you taste the Fire." Then he brought him forward and killed him. The people took him and placed him amidst faggots and burnt him. The burial of 'Ali.' He was buried by night at al Ghari, then his grave was effaced, till it was disclosed where his 'chapel' is now. The reason which drove the son of Muljam to this deed of his, was that he was one of the 'dissenters.' He met two of the 'dissenters' and they recollected those of their number killed by 'Ali' at Nahruwan, and said, "Life is no use to us without our

<sup>1</sup> Lit., biting.

<sup>2</sup> i.e., give himself up again.

friends," and they promised one another that each one of them would kill one of the three,—'Ali, son of Abu Talib, Mua'wiyah and 'Amr, son of al 'As. The son of (78) Muljam said, "I will do 'Ali's business for you. Another said, I will do Mu'awiyah's business for you, and the other said, "I will do 'Amr's business for you." The son of Muljam also saw amongst the 'dissenters' girls a beautiful woman. He wanted her and asked her in marriage. She said to him, "I want such and such, and I want you to kill 'Ali son of Abu Talib. He answered her, "I have come for no other reason than to kill him," and he undertook to her to kill him. Then he assassinated him and himself was put to death after him. Another went to Mu'awiyah, lay in wait for him till he came out, then struck him with a sword, on the side of his buttocks, ineffectively. Mu'awiyah had it dressed and recovered. The man was put to death ; others say that he did not put him to death. The other went to Egypt to kill 'Amr, 142 son of al 'As and lay in wait for him. By a coincidence, 'Amr had been unwell that night<sup>1</sup> and did not go out on the following morning to prayers. He appointed as his deputy one of his friends, and when he<sup>2</sup> got up, the man believed him to be 'Amr, struck him and killed him. They seized him and brought him to 'Amr. When he perceived the people greeting 'Amr as Amir, he said, "Who is that?" They replied, "The Amir 'Amr, son of al 'As." He said, "Then whom have I killed?" They replied, "His deputy,"—who was named Kharijak. Then the man said to 'Amr, son of al 'As, "By Heaven, you wretch ! I only intended you." 'Amr replied, "You intended me but God intended Kharijah." Then 'Amr brought him forward and put him to death. When the (news of) of 'Ali's assassination reached 'Aishah, she said:

"She has thrown down her staff and there come to rest, content as the traveller on return."

<sup>1</sup> Their 'day' beginning at sunset.

<sup>2</sup> The deputy.

148 *The dynasty of the Umayyads which assumed power after the first dynasty*

When 'Ali' was murdered, the people took the oath of allegiance to Hassan, son of 'Ali. He waited a few months till he and Mu'awiyah came to an agreement and achieved a mutual reconciliation for the sake of present advantages of which Hassan was the best informed.<sup>1</sup> He handed over the Caliphate to him and went to Madinah. The oath of allegiance was taken to Mu'awiyah as sole Caliph, and he was proclaimed Commander of the Faithful. This was in the year A.H. 40. Some biographical details of Mu'awiyah and a sketch of his character. He was Mu'awiyah, son of Abu Sufyan Sakr, son of Harb, son of (74) Umayyah, son of 'Abd Shams, son of 'Abd Manaf. His father, Abu Sufyan, was one of the elders of Meccah, who became a Moslem in the year in which the Messenger conquered Meccah. Mu'awiyah, too, became a Moslem and was one of those who wrote down the Revelation in front of the Messenger. His mother was Hind, daughter of 'Utbah, a noble lady of the Quraysh. She became a Moslem in the year of the Conquest<sup>2</sup> and was at the battle of 'Uhud. When Hamzah, son of 'Abd al Muttalib, uncle of the Messenger of God, was laid low by a spear thrust which pierced him, Hind came, mutilated Hamzah, took a piece of his liver and gnawed it, out of hatred for him, because he had killed two of her male relations. Because of this, Mu'awiyah was called "son of the liver eater." When the Prophet conquered Meccah she came to him disguised, in a crowd of Meccan women, who came to take the oath of allegiance to him. When Hind came forward to take the oath to him he stated the conditions of Islam to her, not knowing she was Hind. Despite her fear of him, she answered him back vehemently. Amongst the things he said to her and she replied (was this). He said to her, "Do you swear to me not to kill your children?" In the age of ignorance they used to

<sup>1</sup> Alluding to the secret esoteric knowledge transmitted in 'Ali's family, according to Shi'ite belief.

<sup>2</sup> Of Meccah.

kill their children. Hind answered "We brought them up, when small, but you killed them, when grown up, on the day of Badr." Then he said, "Also that you will not disobey me in (anything) right." She replied, "We have not come to this meeting with the intention of disobeying you." He said, "And that you do not steal." She said, "I have never stolen anything in my life except that I have taken a little from the property of Abu Sufyan at times." Abu Sufyan, her husband, was present.

145 Then the Messenger of God knew that she was Hind, and he said, "Hind?" She replied, "Yes, Messenger of God." She said, "Yes, Messenger of God," and he made no reply because (profession of) Islam cancels anything before it. Then he said, "Also that you do not commit adultery." She answered, "Will a free-born woman commit adultery?" They say that the Messenger of God turned to al 'Abbas, and smiled. Mu'awiyah knew his world, was intelligent, learned, patient, a powerful ruler, an excellent statesman and good administrator in mundane matters, sensible, wise, an orator and eloquent. He was patient in the (proper) place for patience and severe in the place (proper) for severity, but patience was his dominant characteristic. He was generous, freely spending wealth for the sake of the power to which he was passionately addicted. He used to expend large sums on his noble subjects. The nobles of the Quraysh, such as 'Abd Allah, son of al 'Abbas, 'Abd Allah, son of Zubair, 'Abd Allah, son of Ja'far at Tayyar, 'Abd Allah, son of 'Umar, 'Abd Allah son of Abu Bakr, Aban, son of 'Uthman, son of 'Affan, and several of the family of Abu Talib, used continually to visit him in Damascus. They received noble residences, and excellent hospitality. Their

(75) requests were granted, but they always spoke to him in the roughest manner, and behaved to him most rudely. At one time he would jest with them and take no notice of them, at another he would only renew his valuable gifts and numerous presents to them. One day he said to Qays, son of Sa'd, son of 'Ubadah, one of the Helpers, "Qays, I would dearly like the hostilities between myself

and 'Ali to cease in your lifetime." Qays replied, "I would hate those hostilities to cease, leaving you Commander of the Faithful," and he<sup>1</sup> answered him<sup>2</sup> nothing. And this was one of the pleasantest things they said to him! He<sup>1</sup> sent 500 dinars to one of the Helpers, who thought it too little, and said to his son, "Take them, go to Mu'awiyah, 'throw' them in his face, and return them to him. He made his son swear to do that. His son went to Mu'awiyah with the money, and said, "Commander of the Faithful, my father is hasty and quick-tempered; he has ordered me (to do) so and so, has made me swear, and I cannot disobey him." Mu'awiyah put his hand over his face, and said, "Do what your father bade you, and have pity on your paternal uncle.<sup>3</sup> The lad was ashamed, and threw the money, then Mu'awiyah doubled it and sent it to the Helper. It reached the ears of Yazid, his son, who went to Mu'awiyah in anger, and said, "You have gone too far in patience, so much so that I fear it will be counted to you for weakness and cowardice." Mu'awiyah replied, "My dear boy, patience occasions no regrets and is not blameworthy. Go about your business, and let me do what I think best." Through conduct of this kind he became ruler<sup>4</sup> of the world, and the sons of the Refugees and the Helpers submitted to him, though each one of them firmly believed himself more deserving of the Caliphate than he. Mu'awiyah was the shrewdest of the shrewd. It is related that 'Umar, son of al Khattab, said to his intimates, "Do you mention the 'kings of Persia' and the 'Byzantine emperors' and their shrewdness, when you have Mu'awiyah?" One of his shrewd acts was the care he took to win over 'Amr, son of al 'As, and 'Amr, son of al 'As, was one of the shrewdest. At the start of the civil war, which broke out between 'Ali' and Mu'awiyah, he<sup>5</sup> held aloof from both parties. Mu'awiyah thought to win him over and strengthen himself by his counsel, shrewdness, and craft.

<sup>1</sup> Mu'awiya. <sup>2</sup> Qays.

<sup>3</sup> i.e., himself.

<sup>4</sup> Lit., Caliph.

<sup>5</sup> 'Amr.

He sought to win him over, and to attach him to himself. He made him governor of Egypt, combined with him in those well-known ways, and did at Siffin as was done. Despite this, there was no real love (lost) between them, but, in secret, they hated one another. Often that appeared on the expressions of their two faces, and in slips of their two tongues. 'Ali, at Siffin, wanted Mu'awiyah to come out to do single combat with him. 'Amr, son of al 'As, said to him,<sup>1</sup> "He has made you a fair offer and refusal to do single combat with him will not become you." Mu'awiyah replied to him, "You (76) deceived me, and want me killed. Do you not know that no one does single combat with 'Ali, without being killed by him?" One day, Mu'awiyah said to his intimates, "What is the most wonderful thing?" Yazid replied, "The most wonderful thing is this cloud, motionless betwixt sky and earth, nothing props it from below itself, and it is not suspended by anything from above itself." Another said, "The most wonderful thing is fortune attained by a boor, and want attained by a sensible man. Another said, "The most wonderful thing is that the like of which is not seen." 'Amr, son of al 'As said, "The most wonderful thing is that a waster should get the better of a deserving man,"—hinting at 'Ali and Mu'awiyah. Mu'awiyah answered, "No, the most wonderful thing is that a man should be given what he does not deserve, when he is not (even) feared,"—hinting at 'Amr (148) and Egypt. Thus each one one of the two spat out what was in his breast concerning the other. Know that Mu'awiyah was an organiser of empires, an administrator of peoples and a ruler of kingdoms. In the empire he inaugurated many things done by no-one before him. Among them was that he was the first to provide an escort for kings ; to have lances raised before them ; to have a 'private pew,'—wherein the ruler or Caliph would pray in the cathedral mosque apart from the people. That was because he was afraid of what had happened to 'Ali, so he used to pray alone in a 'private pew,' and, when he pros-

<sup>1</sup> Mu'awiyah.

trated himself in prayer, guards stood at his head with (drawn) swords. Also he was the first to use the post for the speedy transmission of news. A word on the function of the post. The post (meant) that trained horses were put at a number of places. When the carrier of urgent news arrived at one of these places, and his horse was tired, he mounted in its stead a rested horse, and so he would do at the next place, and the next, till he arrived speedily. As for its philological meaning, the post (barid) is twelve miles. I think that the maximum they could manage between post stage and post stage was this distance. The Sahib 'Ala ad Din 'Ata Malik in (his book) *Jihan Kushay*<sup>1</sup> says, "Amongst many other things, they established the post everywhere, with the object of protecting wealth and speedy transmission of news and of ever changing affairs." But I (myself) do not see in the post any utility except the speedy transmission of news, and, as for the protection of wealth, what confection has it with that? Another invention of Mu'awiyah's in administration was the 'despatching registry.' This office was considered one of the most important offices, and had a continuous tradition to the middle of the 'Abbasid dynasty,—then it was abolished. Its function was that there should be an office with 'civil' servants in it. When an official memorandum came from the Caliph (77) with an instruction, the memorandum was brought to this office, a true copy of it was made, it was then pierced by a thread and sealed with wax as is done nowadays with legal documents. It was finally sealed with the seal of the officer in charge of this office. The thing which drove Mu'awiyah to create this office was that he credited a man against Ziyad, "the son of his father," with 100,000 dirhams. That man went away and read the letter,—for their official memoranda used to be despatched without seal,—and he made the hundred into two hundred. When Ziyad rendered his accounts to Mu'awiyah, Mu'awiyah disowned that, and said, "I only credited him with 100,000." Then he made him refund

<sup>1</sup> "The Conqueror of the world."

it, and created the despatching registry, so that memoranda should be despatched under seal, no-one knowing their contents, and no-one being able to alter them. Mu'awiyah was entirely absorbed in the administration of mundane matters. Nothing 'mattered' to him so long as the affairs of the state were in good order. Consider the description of him by 'Abd al Malik, son of Marwan, who perceived this tendency in him. They say that 'Abd al Malik, son of Marwan, passed by Mu'awiyah's grave, and said, "God have mercy on him," Someone said to him, "Whose grave is this, Commander of the Faithful?" He replied, "The grave of a man, who, in truth, according to what I knew of him,<sup>1</sup> spoke from knowledge and was silent from patience. When he gave, he enriched; when he made war, he annihilated." 'Abd Allah, son of 'Abbas,—a severe critic,—also described him, saying, "I never saw (anyone) more endowed with the proclivities for leadership or rule than Mu'awiyah." One of the Umayyads said to him, "If you could profit by the Zanj, you would surely profit by them to improve your administration of the State. Mu'awiyah was greedy and mean about food, despite his generosity and openhandedness. Concerning his greed, they say that he used to eat daily five meals, of which the last was the largest, then he would say to his servant, "Clear away, I am not, indeed, satisfied, but tired." It is related that a roast calf was prepared for him. He ate with it a platter of white bread, four cakes, one kid (served) hot, another cold, apart from (various other) dishes. He (had) put before himself a hundred 'measures,'<sup>2</sup> of green vegetables, and got through that. As for his manners over food, the son of Abu Bakr came to him, together with his son, His son began to eat food to excess, and Mu'awiyah looked at him. Abu Bakr perceived Mu'awiyah's displeasure and wanted to prevent his son eating much, but had no chance to do that. They two left Mu'awiyah, and, on the next morning the father presented himself

<sup>1</sup> The *ta marbuta* of the text seems an obvious error for the pronoun.

<sup>2</sup> Each about 5 lbs. English.



(78) without his son. Mu'awiyah said to him, "What about your son?" He replied, "Commander of the Faithful, he is unwell." He said, "I knew that (all) that eating would not fail to give him indigestion." Here is the place for a pleasing anecdote, indicating generosity, manly spirit, and merit. A certain minister was extremely fond of 'the table,' and liked anyone who would eat with him. The more anyone ate, the dearer he was to him. It chanced that he wished to annoy a senior 'Alid, so he made up a total of his tax demand notes, the sureties he had gone and other debts, and demanded (payment of) them from him. He then put him under guard in his own house,—I mean the house of the minister. One day the table cloth was spread before the minister, and then the 'Alid said to those in charge of him, "I am hungry, do you permit me to go out to the 'table,'—you being with me,—I will eat and return hither?" The 'Alid had already perceived the nature of the minister in this respect. They were ashamed to (refuse) him, and gave him leave to do this. He went out, sat at the furthest end of the cloth, and began to eat greedily. The minister watched him addressing himself to the food, made him come nearer, promoted him to the seat of honour, and offered him the choicest foods there. As he ate more the affability and pleasure of the minister increased. When the food was cleared away, the minister called for a brazier containing fire, brought the statement of account which had been presented to the man, and said, "Sir, God has paid this  
 152 debt for you, you are free of it. I 'solemnly promise you' neither I nor the office have another copy of this statement of account." Then he threw it in the brazier and it was burnt. He freed him, and let him go in the evening to his house. One of the matters of importance to the people at large and to the Umayyads in particular, was the decision to recognise legitimacy. That was Mu'awiyah's recognition of the legitimacy of Ziyad "son of his father." He<sup>1</sup> made him<sup>2</sup> his own brother, to profit himself<sup>1</sup> through him<sup>2</sup> and to strengthen himself<sup>1</sup> by his<sup>2</sup> counsel and shrewd-

<sup>1</sup> Mu'awiyah.    <sup>2</sup> Ziyad.

ness. A brief explanation of how the recognition of legitimacy came about. Sumayyah, the mother of Ziyad, was an Arab whore. She had a husband, named 'Ubaid. It chanced that Abu Sufyan, who was the father of Mu'awiyah, halted at a wineseller's, named Abu Maryam. Abu Sufyan asked him for a whore, and Abu Maryam answered him, "Will Sumayyah do for you?" Abu Sufyan used to have intercourse with her, so he said, "Bring her, despite her pendulous breasts, the smell of her belly and armpits, and the stink of her breath." So he brought her to him; Abu Sufyan lay with her, she conceived Ziyad by him, and bore him on the bed of her husband, 'Ubaid. When Ziyad grew up, he received an education, excelled, held several (official) positions, and 'Umar, son of al Khattab, made him governor of a Province, a post he held well. Once 'Umar was present at a Council, at which were the senior Companions, and Abu Sufyan (also was) among those present. Ziyad made an eloquent speech, the like of which they had never heard. 'Amr, son of al 'As, said, "A good lad, that. Had his father been of the Quarrysh, he would drive the Arabs with his stick." Abu Sufyan said, "I know the father who begat him in his mother's womb well enough!"—he meant himself. 'Ali said to him, "Be quiet, Abu Sufyan, for you know that, if 'Umar were to hear you talking thus, he would punish you. When he<sup>1</sup> became Caliph, he appointed Ziyad Governor of Persia. He<sup>2</sup> kept it in good order, maintained its fortresses in a state of defence, and held office there to satisfaction. His competence became widely known, and the news reached Mu'awiyah, who disliked one of 'Ali's supporters being a man of Ziyad's calibre, and desired (to win) him for himself. So he wrote to him, threatening him, and alluding to his having Abu Sufyan as a father. He said to him, "You are my brother." Ziyad paid no attention to him, and the news reached 'Ali, who wrote to Ziyad, "I appointed you governor as I did, and I deem you worthy of it. Abu Sufyan made a slip, due to a vain man's

<sup>1</sup> 'Ali. <sup>2</sup> Ziyad.

desires and self-deceit. You have no right to inherit, nor is any share (of the estate) legally yours. Mu'awiyah attacks a man from in front and behind from his right hand and his left. So take good care and goodbye." When 'Ali was murdered, Mu'awiyah tried hard to gain the real affection of Ziyad, his co-operation, and to induce him to join his party. The matter of Abu Sufyan being (Ziyad's) father was raised between them, and they two agreed on recognition of legitimacy. Witnesses attended Mu'awiyah's audience hall and testified that Ziyad was the child of Abu Sufyan. One of the witnesses was Abu Maryam the wineseller, who brought Sumayyah to Abu Sufyan. This Abu Maryam had already become a Moslem, and a good one, too. He said to him, "To what do you testify, Abu Maryam?" He replied, "I testify

154 that Abu Sufyan came to my place and asked me for a whore. I said to him, "I have only Sumayyah here," and he replied, "Bring her despite her smell and filth." So I brought her to him, he was alone with her and she came out from him dripping semen." Then Ziyad said to him, "Steady, Abu Maryam, you have been summoned as a witness, not as a speaker of evil." Then Mu'awiyah accorded him recognition of legitimacy. They said that this recognition was the first reversal in public of the principles of the canon law. For the Messenger of God gave decision that the child belongs to the bed (of its parents) and the adulterer should be stoned. People excused Mu'awiyah, alleging "Recognition was permissible to Mu'awiyah because sexual relations of the ignorance,<sup>1</sup> were of many kinds, one of which was that, if public women had loose intercourse and thereafter a child, that woman claimed as father of the child whichever she wished of (her lovers) and hers was the last word in this matter. But when Islam came, it made sexual relations of this kind illegal, except that it confirmed each child's descent from the father known to be his from

(80) any sort of their sexual relationships, Islam making no distinction between them." Others say "You have spoken

<sup>1</sup> i.e., before Islam,

the truth in this, but Mu'awiyah imagined that this was the case and did not differentiate between the recognition of legitimacy (customary) of the ignorance and of Islam, for Ziyad was not known in the ignorance as 'the son of' Abu Sufyan, but only as that of 'Ubaid, so that he used to be called Ziyad, son of 'Ubaid." Between the two cases is a difference. Alluding to the affair, the poet says:

"Tell Mu'awiyah, son of Harb, of a new insinuation by the Yamanite ;

Are you angry that your father be called pure, and do you wish him to be called a whoremonger ?

I vow that your relationship to Ziyad is as that of the elephant to the foal of an ass."

The word Rihm (here means) relationship. Thereafter Ziyad became one of Mu'awiyah's men and supporters. He made him Governor of Basrah, Khurasan and Sijistan, adding to him India, Bahrain, and 'Uman. He further added to him, towards the end of his reign, Kufah. Ziyad subscribed his letters, "From Ziyad, son of Abu Sufyan"; before that sometimes he was called Ziyad, son of 'Ubaid, and, sometimes, Ziyad, son of Sumayyah. Preferrers of the truth used to call him Ziyad, son of his father. Ziyad was one of the shrewdest of men, an excellent administrator, much respected, of sound judgment, just, energetic, intelligent and eloquent. Mu'awiyah's death was in the year A.H. 60. When death overtook him, he left for his son, Yazid, instructions which indicated his commonsense, his intelligence, his experience of affairs and his knowledge of men. Yazid fulfilled none of them, but I have recorded them here because of their excellence and justice. They say that when Mu'awiyah was ill with the illness from which he died, he summoned his son, Yazid, and said to him, "My dear son, I have already saved you (the necessity of) violence and travelling, I have smoothed matters for you, I have humbled your enemies for you, I have bowed the necks of the Arabs to you, and I have collected for you what no-one has ever collected. Regard the people of the Hijaz, for they are your origin ; be

generous to any of them who come forward to (meet) you and take care of him who is far away. Regard the people of Iraq ; if they ask you to depose a governor daily, do it, for the deposition of a governor is easier than that a hundred swords be drawn. Regard the Syrians, and let them be your intimates ; if any of your enemies disturb you, seek help from them, and when you have conquered them, then return the Syrians to their homes, for, if they  
 (81) remain therein, their characters change (for the better). I am not afraid that any will challenge you for this realm except four of the Quraysh,—Husain, son of 'Ali, 'Abd Allah, son of 'Umar, 'Abd Allah, son of Zubair ; and 'Abd ar Rahman, son of Abu Bakr. As for the son of 'Umar, piety has consumed him and he would take the oath of allegiance to you if he were the last man left. As for Husain, son of 'Ali, he is a man of no weight, and the people of 'Iraq will not leave him alone till they have made him rebel ; if he rebel, and you master him, pardon him, for he is of near kin, has great rights and kinship with Muhammad. As for the son of Abu Bakr, if he sees his friends do anything, he does the same ; he only desires women and play. But as for him who crouches for you as crouches a lion, and uses the crafts of the fox against you, and, if a chance gives him the power, attacks, (and that was the son of Zubair,) if he attacks you and you master him,  
 157 then cut him to bits, and spare your people bloodshed as much as you can." In these instructions, is a proof of what has preceded about his great interest for the administration of the realm, and his violent passion for leadership. Then his son Yazid ruled after him. He was extremely interested in amusement, hunting, wine, women and song. He was eloquent, generous, and an excellent poet. They say poetry began with a ruler, and ended with one, referring to Imr' al Qays and to him. (This is) from his poetry :

" She came, her face as though full moonlight were its veil, poised on a swaying (body graceful) as a branch  
 One of her two hands gave me bright (wine) like her cheek which the dye of modesty flushed ;

Then she became mistress of herself, and said,—well knowing what she would say, and the sun of the wine had not gone down,—

Go not, for you have left me no strength with which I can say goodbye to one who is sent away<sup>1</sup>

No sleep to evoke a dream image therein, no tears to weep over the traces (of our home).”

According to the most trustworthy of the two accounts, his rule was for three years and six months. In the first year he murdered Husain, son of 'Ali ; in the second year he looted Madinah, and gave it to sack for three days ; in the third year he raided the Ka'abah. We begin with an account of the murder of Husain. A brief description  
 158 of how that happened. This is a matter concerning which I do not wish prolixity, thinking it to be too serious and terrible, for no more horrible event than it has occurred in Islam. Indeed, the murder of 'Ali' was the greatest disaster, but this event included hideous murdering, taking prisoner and mutilation enough to make the flesh<sup>2</sup> creep. Also I may spare myself prolixity on this subject, because it is well-known, being, the most notorious of disasters, may God's curse be on him who took part in it, ordered it, or in any way liked it ; may He accept from him no recompense or compensation, and may He make him one of those frustrated in their works, whose efforts go astray in the life of this world whilst they think that they are doing good works. A summary of what occurred was that Yazid, when the oath of allegiance was taken to him, was much concerned to obtain the oath of allegiance from Husain, and the little band of those against whom his father had warned him. So he sent to Walid, son of 'Utbah, son of Abu Sufyan, who at that time was Amir of Madinah, ordering him to make them take the oath of allegiance. He<sup>3</sup> summoned them, Husain presented himself to him, and he<sup>1</sup> informed him of Mu'awiyah's

<sup>1</sup> Amar, probably more correctly, prefers to correct the text reading to the active.

<sup>2</sup> Lit., 'skin make goose flesh.'

<sup>3</sup> Walid.

death, and invited him to take the oath. But Husain said to him, "Such as I do not take the oath of allegiance in secret, but, when the people have met together, we will consider and you will consider." Then Husain left him, collected his friends, and went out of Madinah, making for Meccah, refusing to take the oath of allegiance, being too proud to be ranked in the category of his subjects. When he had settled in Meccah, his refusal to take oath of allegiance to Yazid connected with the people of Kufah, who used to loathe the Umayyads, especially Yazid, because of his evil life, his open impiety and his passion for debauchery. So they sent to Hussain, and wrote him a letter inviting him to come to Kufah, when they would make all effort to help him against the Umayyads. They met together, made mutual vows to this effect, and letters to him to the same purpose came one after another. So he sent to them his cousin, Muslim, son of 'Aqil, son of Abu Talib, and, when he reached Kufah, the news spread to 'Ubaid Allah, son of Ziyad, —may God curse him and make him dwell in the house of shame,—whom Ziyad had put in charge of Kufah; when he heard of the despatches sent by its inhabitants to Hussain. Muslim had already sought refuge in the house of Hani', son of 'Urwah, one of the noblest of the Kufans. 'Ubaid Allah, son of Ziyad, summoned him and asked him about him.<sup>1</sup> He<sup>2</sup> refused (to say) and he<sup>3</sup> smote him<sup>2</sup> with his staff and disfigured him. Then (85) Muslim, son of 'Aqil, was brought before him, his head<sup>4</sup> was struck off 'on the roof of' the castle. His head fell and his trunk followed his head. Hani' was brought out into the market and his head<sup>4</sup> was struck off. About this, Farazdaq said :—

160 "If you do not know what death is, look at Hani' in the market, and the son of 'Aqil,  
At a hero, whose face the sword has disfigured, and at another who fell killed from aloft."

<sup>1</sup> Muslim.    <sup>2</sup> Hani.    <sup>3</sup> 'Ubaid Allah.

<sup>4</sup> Lit., 'neck.'

Then Husain left Meccah making for Kufah, in ignorance of the position of Muslim. When he neared Kufah, he learned what had happened. People met him, told him the news and warned him. But he did not go back and persisted in going on to Kufah for reasons better known to himself than to others. The son of Ziyad sent against him troops under the command of 'Umar, son of Sa'd, son of Abu Waqqas. When the two parties met, Husain and his adherents fought a fight of which none had seen the like, till his adherents were annihilated, and he and his personal friends remained. They fought the fiercest fight people had seen, then Husain was horribly murdered, after he had displayed endurance, good judgment, bravery, piety, perfect knowledge of the art of war, and eloquence, and his family and adherents material and moral assistance to him, together with unwillingness to live after him, and a well-fought struggle to protect him of which the like had not been seen. Then there was looting and taking prisoner of his troops and children. The women and his head were carried to Yazid, son of Mu'awiyah, in Damacus, and he began to knock Husain's teeth with his staff. Then he returned the women to Madinah. The murder of Husain was on the 10th of Muharam in the year 61. An account of the battle of the Harrah. Then, in the second place, was his fight with the inhabitants of 'Madinah,'—that was the battle of the Harrah. The start of this affair was that the people of Madinah disliked the 'rule' of Yazid, renounced their allegiance to him, besieged those of the Umayyads in it, and terrified them. The Umayyads sent a messenger to Yazid to inform him of their position, and, when the messenger reached Yazid and gave him the news, he quoted as appropriate :—

“They have already altered the patience which was in my nature, and I have substituted harshness to my people for kindness.”

Then he invited (to march) against it 'Amr, son of Sa'id, who recoiled from it and sent to him, saying, “I have



already administered affairs and territories for you, but now that it has become a matter of spilling the blood of the Quraysh on the earth, I do not want to be put in charge of that." Then he invited 'Uбайд Allah, son of Ziyad, to (do) that (work), but he made excuses, saying, "No, indeed, I will not combine for the sake of this wicked man, two (sins) ; that I kill the son of the Messenger of God, and that I raid his city and the Ka'abah." Then he invited (to march) against it Muslim, son of 'Uqbah, the Murrite. He was an old, sick man, but, nevertheless, one of the devilish tyrants amongst the Arabs. It is said that his father<sup>1</sup> said to him<sup>2</sup>, "if the  
 182 people of Madinah disobey you, hurl against them Muslim, son of 'Uqbah." Muslim, son of 'Uqbah, proceeded thither, though he was sick, and invested it from the side of the Harrah,—a place<sup>3</sup> outside the town. A chair was set for Muslim, son of 'Uqbah, between the two (opposing) ranks, and he sat urging on his adherents to the fight, till they took it,<sup>4</sup> and in that battle killed a number of its chief men. It is said that Abu Sa'id al Khudari, a companion, was afraid, took his sword and went out to a cave there to enter it and found refuge in it. A Syrian followed him. Abu Sa'id was afraid of him, and drew his sword against him to frighten him. The other drew his sword and, when he came to Abu Sa'id, the latter said, "Even though you stretch forth your hand against me to kill me, I will not stretch forth my hand against you to kill you." The Syrian then said to him, "Who are you?" He replied, "I am Abu Sa'id." (The other) asked, "The Companion?" He replied, "Yes," and (the other) passed on and left him alone. Then Muslim, son of 'Uqbah, for three days gave Madinah to sack. He murdered, looted and took prisoner, so that it was said that a man of Madinah thereafter, if he gave his daughter to wed, would not guarantee her virginity, being wont to say, "She may have been raped in the battle of the Harrah." Muslim, son of 'Uqbah, was named the spendthrift.<sup>5</sup> An account of the

<sup>1</sup> Mu'awiyah. <sup>2</sup> Yazid. <sup>3</sup> a lava ridge. <sup>4</sup> Madinah. <sup>5</sup> i.e., of human life.

183 expedition against the Ka'abah. In the third place, Yazid sent an expedition against the Ka'abah. He ordered Muslim, son of 'Uqbah, to go to it and make an expedition against it when he had finished with Madinah. Muslim went to it. In it was 'Abd Allah, son of Zubair, who had already proclaimed himself (Caliph) and the people of Meccah followed him. But Muslim died on the road, and had left as his successor in charge of the army a man whom Yazid had nominated; should he die. (This man) went on with the army to Meccah, and invested it. The son of Zubair, with the men of Meccah, made a sally against him, battle was joined and a Syrian versifier said :—

(85) “ ‘ Artillery ’ like a foaming stallion, with which he shoots at the timbers<sup>1</sup> of this mosque.”

They were thus engaged when notification of the death of Yazid arrived, and they returned. After him ruled his son Mu'awiyah, son of Yazid, son of Mu'awiyah. He was a weak youth and ruled for forty days, or, as some say, for three months. He then said to the people, “ I am too weak to govern you. I have looked for some one like 'Umar, son of al Khattab, for you, and have not found him. I have looked for six men like the men of the Council, and have not found them. You are the best judges of your own affairs, so choose for it<sup>2</sup> whomsoever you like, but I will not take it<sup>2</sup> as provision with me in death, nor have I enjoyed it in life.” Then he entered his house, was not seen for some days and died. Some say he died of poison. None of his deeds merit record. After him ruled Marwan, son of Hakam. He was Marwan, son of Hakam, son of Abu al 'As, son of Umayyah, son of 'Abd Shams, son of 'Abd Manaf. When 164 Mu'awiyah, son of Yazid, son of Mu'awiyah died, the people were agitated. The Syrians wanted the Umayyads, others than they wanted the son of Zubair. The partisans of the Umayyads won but they disagreed as to whom

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the Prophet's pulpit and other relics.

<sup>2</sup> i.e., rule.

they should put in power. Some of them inclined to Khalid, son of Yazid, son of Mu'awiyah, who was learned and eloquent ; it is said that he was an alchemist, though only a young man. Others inclined to Marwan, son of Hakam because of his years and ' position.' They disliked Khalid, on account of his youth. Finally, they took the oath of allegiance to Marwan, who took command of the troops and conquered Egypt. He was called " the exiled's son," because the Messenger of God had exiled his father Hakam from Madinah. When 'Uthman, son of 'Affan, ruled, he recalled Hakam, though the Moslems disliked his doing that. He argued that the Messenger of God had promised him his recall. Traditions and anecdotes were cited concerning the cursing of Hakam, grandson of al 'As, and of his descendants, but some regard them as invalid. Whoever wished to blame and find fault with Marwan used to say to him, " Child of the woman in blue." [Zarqa, or, " the blue-eyed."] Zarqa, their grandmother, was, they said, one of the women with blue flags, with which they used to indicate whoreshops in the age of ignorance. Hence they were considered dishonoured through them. Marwan, when the oath of allegiance was taken, had already married the mother of Khalid, the wife of Yazid, son of Mu'awiyah, that, thereby, the position of Khalid might be less, and become inferior in respect of " claim " to the Caliphate. (86) One day Khalid went in to Marwan, who said to him, " You son of a wet mother," and accused him of stupidity, so that his position might be less in the eyes of the Syrians. Khalid blushed, went to his mother and told her of what Marwan had said to him. She replied, " Let no one (86) know you have informed me, and I will manage the business for you." Then one night when Marwan slept with her, she placed a cushion on his face and did not raise it till he was dead. His son, 'Abd al Malik, wished to put her to death, but he was told, " People will say that a woman killed your father," so he left her alone. Marwan ruled for nine months and part of a month. This is the interpretation of ' 'Ali's' saying, " His rule

will be like a dog's licking of its nose." At this time the Shi'ites began to take revenge for Husain. A short account of how that came about. When the civil war after the murder of Husain died down, and Yazid, son of Mu'awiyah, had died, some of the Kufans met together and were sorry for their desertion of Husain, for their fighting against him and for their aiding his murderers after they had sent to him, invited him to come to them, and offered him every help. They repented of that, and were named the penitents. Then they took oath to devote their lives and wealth to seeking revenge for him, to combating his murderers, and to establishing the right where it should be established,—in a person from the family of the house of the Prophet. They took as their leader a man from amongst themselves called Sulaiman, son of Surad, who wrote to the Shi'ites in the (Provincial) capitals, calling on them for this (object). They replied to him accepting, and promptly. Then there appeared at that time al Mukhtar, son of Abu 'Ubaid the Thakifite, a man of noble soul, lofty aspiration and generous, who issued propaganda in the interests of Muhammad, son of 'Ali, son of Abu Talib, known as the son of al Hanafiyyah. Those days were days of civil wars, because Marwan, to whom the oath of allegiance had been taken and who sat on the royal throne, was Caliph in Syria and Egypt; 'Abd Allah, son of Zubair, was Caliph in the Hijaz and Basrah, the oath of allegiance had been taken to him and he had troops and arms; and al Mukhtar, son of Abu 'Ubaid was in Kufah with men, troops and weapons. The Governor of Kufah had left it, and he became its governor, issuing propaganda in favour of Muhammad, son of al Hanafiyyah. Then the power of al Mukhtar grew strong, he attacked the murderers of Husain, and beheaded 'Umar, son of Sa'd and his son, saying "This is for Husain, and his son<sup>1</sup> Ali. In truth, were I to kill for him two-thirds of the Quraysh, they would not suffice for the tip of one of his fingers." Then Marwan sent 'Ubaid Allah, son of Ziyad, with a numerous army.

<sup>1</sup> Amar mistranslates 'father ?

Against him al Mukhtar sent Ibrahim, son of Malik al Ashtar, who killed him in the region of Mosul, and sent his head to al Mukhtar. It was thrown into the castle, and it is said that a thin snake crawled over the heads of the slain, entered the mouth of 'Ubaid Allah and came out of his nostril. Then it entered his nostril and came out of his mouth, doing this several times. Then 'Abd Allah, son of Zubair, sent his brother Musa'b,—  
 167 a brave man,—against al Mukhtar, and he<sup>1</sup> killed him.<sup>2</sup> Marwan, son of Hakam, died in the year 65, and the oath of allegiance was taken to his son 'Abd al Malik. Then reigned 'Abd al Malik, son of Marwan. 'Abd al Malik was clever, sensible, learned, a tyrannical ruler, much feared, a statesman and good administrator for mundane affairs in his day. The registers were changed from Persian to Arabic, and the public accounts rendered for the first time in Arab style. He was the first to forbid subjects free speech in the presence of the Caliphs, and answering them back. They used to be audacious to them, as has already been recounted. He it was who gave al Hajjaj, son of Yusuf, sovereign power over the people, sent an expedition against the Ka'abah, and killed 'Abd Allah, son of Zubair, together with his brother Musa'b before him. One of the curious things about this was that, when Yazid, son of Mu'awiyah, sent the army to combat the people of Medinah and on an expedition against the Ka'abah, 'Abd al Malik was extremely upset at this, and said, "Would that the sky might overwhelm the earth," but, when he became Caliph, he did it and worse than it, for he sent al Hajjaj to invest the son of Zubair, and on an expedition against the Ka'abah. Before becoming Caliph, 'Abd al Malik was one of the canon lawyers of Medinah. He used to be called the dove of the mosque, because of his continual reciting of the Koran. But when his father died. and he was congratulated on (accession to) the Caliphate, he closed the Koran saying, "This is a separation between me and you" and he  
 168 occupied himself wholly with mundane matters. It is

<sup>1</sup> Musa'b. <sup>2</sup> Mukhtar.

said that he said one day to Sa'id, son of Musayyab, "Sa'id, I have come to a point where I do good without rejoicing at it, and evil without being upset at it." Sa'id, son of Musayyab, replied, "Now your heart is completely dead." In his time were killed 'Abd Allah, son of Zubair, and his brother Musa'b, Amir of 'Iraq. 'Abd Allah, son of Zubair, had taken refuge in Meccah, and the people of the Hijaz had taken the oath of allegiance to him,<sup>1</sup> also those of 'Iraq. He was most avaricious, and because of this his affairs did not succeed. He<sup>2</sup> sent al Hajjaj against him,<sup>3</sup> and he<sup>4</sup> invested him in Meccah, shot at the Ka'abah with his 'artillery,' and made war on him.<sup>3</sup> His family and friends deserted him,<sup>3</sup> and he went to his mother and said to her, "Mother, the people have deserted me, even my child and my family. A small band only remains with me and those who will not endure above an hour. The enemy will give me anything I want in the world, so what do you advise?" She replied to him, "You know best about yourself. If you know that you are in the right, carry your business right through and do not put your neck in the power of the 'low class' Umayyads. If you want this world, how base a slave are you, you have destroyed yourself and those with you. However long you may last in the world, to be killed would be better." Then he said, "Mother, I fear that, if they kill me they will mutilate me." She replied, "My dear son, its being flayed does not hurt the sheep, after its throat has been cut." She kept on encouraging him with this and its like, till he went forth and persisted in combat till he was killed. al Hallaj sent the good news to 'Abd al Malik, and this was in the year 73. His brother, Musa'b, son of Zubair, Amir of 'Iraq, was brave, comely, of noble rank, much praised. He married Sukainah, daughter of Husain, and A'ishah, daughter of Talhah, keeping the two of them together in his house, though they were two ladies of highest rank, wealth and beauty. 'Abd al Malik one day said to his companions, "Who is

<sup>1</sup> For ta marbuta reading ha. The former seems an obvious error.

<sup>2</sup> 'Abd al Malik. <sup>3</sup> 'Abd Allah. <sup>4</sup> Al Hajjaj.

the bravest man ? ” They replied, “ You.” He answered, “ No, the bravest man is he who kept together in his house A’ishah, daughter of Talhah, and Sukainah, daughter of Husain,”—meaning Musa’b. Then ‘Abd al Malik prepared to fight Musa’b and said goodbye to his wife ‘Atikah, daughter of Yazid, son of Mu’awiyah. When he said goodbye to her, she wept, and her handmaids wept because she wept. ‘Abd al Malik said, ‘Curse’ ‘Azza’s Kuthayyir ; it is as though he saw this moment, when he said :—

“ Whenever he wanted to go on an expedition, a chaste girl, adorned by a necklace of pearls, made not his purpose swerve,

She forbade him, and when she saw her forbidding useless, she wept, and her servants wept at what grieved her.”

Then he attacked Musa’b, and they met in the region of the Little Tigris. They fought a savage battle, and Musa’b was killed,—this was in the year 71. ‘Abd al Malik was educated, shrewd, and eminent. Sha’bi said, “ I have conversed with no one to whom I have not found myself superior except ‘Abd al Malik, son of Marwan. But I never recounted a tradition to him without his improving my (knowledge) of it, nor a verse without his capping it. It was said to ‘Abd al Malik, “ White hair has come to you early.” He replied, “ My white hair is (89) (due to) ascending the pulpit, and to fear of a fault in speech,” for a fault in speech amongst them was (considered) the worst thing possible. One of his sound (pieces of) advice which I will indicate was that (which he gave), whilst still a youth, to Muslim, son of ‘Uqbah the Murrīte, when Yazid, son of Mu’awiyah, sent him to fight the people of Madinah. He reached it and the Umayyads invested it, then were driven out. When Muslim, son of ‘Uqbah, met them, he asked the advice of ‘Abd al Malik, son of Marwan, who was then a young man and who said to him, “ The sound plan is that you and your men advance and when you reach the nearest

of its<sup>1</sup> palm trees, halt, so that the men may shelter in their shade and eat the pick of them. At dawn, go on, leave the town on the left hand then circle it in an easterly direction till you attack them from the side of the Harrah. Then you will be facing the enemy, and, when you have taken position facing them, the sun will have risen in their eyes, but behind the shoulders of your adherents. It will not inconvenience them, but its inconvenience will hit the men of Medinah, who will see the flashing of your helmets, of the tips of your spears, and swords and of your armour, in a way that you will not, so long as they remain (stationed) to the west. Then fight them and seek help from God." 'Abd al Malik said one day to his intimates, "What do you say of the saying of him

171 who said :

"I love David madly whilst alive, and, if I die,  
'Curse' him who loves him after me."

They replied, "A nice conceit," but he said, "This dead man goes too far, this conceit is not pleasant." They replied, "You have spoken truly." He said, "Then how should be put it?" One of them answered, "He ought to put it like this :

"I love David madly whilst alive, and, if I die, I will  
leave David to one who will love him madly after  
me."

'Abd al Malik said, "This is a complaisant dead man!" Then they said, "Well, how should it be?" He answered,

"I love David madly whilst alive, and, if I die, may  
David not find 'true' love after me."

They said, "You, Commander of the Faithful, are the best poet of the three." When his sickness was severe, he said, "Take me up to a high place," and they took him up to a high place. He began to sniff the air, saying, "This world, how good you are? Your length is but brevity, and your abundance but scantiness. In you

<sup>1</sup> Madinah's.



we are indeed deceived," and he quoted as apposite these two verses :

- 172 " If you reckon strictly, your reckoning, Lord, would be a punishment ; the punishment I could not bear ;  
Or, will you forgive, for you are the Lord of pardon for a wrong doer whose sins are like the dust (in number). "

When he died, his son Walid prayed over him, and his other son Hisham quoted as apposite :—

- (90) " The death of Qays is not the death of a single man, but it causes the building of a people to fall in ruin."

Walid said to him, " Be quiet, for you talk with the tongue of a devil. Why say you not as says another :

" When one of our chiefs passes on, a chief arises (to take his place) who talks as talk the nobles, a man of action, too."

- 'Abd al Malik, son of Marwan, instructed his brother 'Abd al 'Aziz, when he went to Egypt as its Amir, as follows : " Make your countenance agreeable, and your protection easy. Prefer kindness in affairs, for that will (best) achieve your purpose. Keep an eye on your chamberlain, and let him be the best of your household, for he is your face and your tongue. Let none stand at your door without his informing you of his being there, so that you yourself either grant an audience or refuse it. When you go forth to your audience room, be the first with a greeting, so that they may feel at home with you, and so that affection for you may be fixed in their hearts. If a problem meets you, overcome it by consultation, for that opens closed matters. If you are angry with any one, put off punishing him, for you are more able to punish after the delay than you are to recall it after putting it into effect." His death was in the year 86. Then ruled  
173 his son Walid. The Syrians thought Walid one of the best of their Caliphs in conduct. He built cathedral

mosques, that of Damascas, that of Madinah,—‘blessings’ on him who lives there,—and the remotest mosque.<sup>1</sup> He made grants to the lepers, and stopped them from public begging. To every cripple he gave a servant, and to every blind man one to lead him. In his Caliphate, he made great conquests, including Spain, Kashgar and India. He was violently fond of ‘house property’ and buildings, making monuments and estates. In his time, when people met, some would ask others about buildings and ‘house property.’ His brother Sulaiman, was fond of food and sex, and, in his Caliphate, when people met, some used to ask others about food and sex. ‘Umar, son of ‘Abd al ‘Aziz was pious, and a reciter of the Koran, so, when people met in his time, some used to ask others “What is your ‘chapter’ (for reading) to-night?”, and, “How much of the Koran have you learnt by heart?”, and “How many vigils have you kept this month?” This is one of the special attributes of a ruler, of which an account has already been given. He<sup>2</sup> was faulty in speech, and ungrammatical. An Arab came to him one day, and sought to ingratiate himself with him by means of a relationship (existing) between them. Walid said to him, “Who circumcised you?”,—‘vowelling wrongly’,<sup>3</sup>

174 —and the Arab thought he was asking about his circumcision, and replied, “A certain doctor.” Sulaiman,

(91) his brother, said to him, “‘Walid’ was only asking you, “Who are your in-laws?”,—‘vowelling correctly’,—and the Arab replied, “Yes, my in-law is so and so,” mentioning his relationship. His father ‘Abd al Malik, blamed him for faulty speech, saying to him, “Only he who speaks their language well will rule the Arabs.” Walid went into a room, took with him a number of grammarians, and spent a long time working in it, but came out more ignorant than he was the day he went in. When that (news) reached ‘Abd al Malik, he said, “He is excused.” Then ruled after him, his brother, Sulaiman, son of ‘Abd al Malik. His days were days of continuous conquests.

<sup>1</sup> i.e., at Jerusalem.

<sup>2</sup> Walid.

<sup>3</sup> Refer to the text for the untranslatable play on the root KHTN.

He was a jealous man,—most jealous,—and a glutton. It is said that his cook used to bring him the roast, and he could not wait till it cooled, but seized it in his sleeve. He spoke well and eloquently. Here is a place for an anecdote. al Asma'i said, "Once I was talking with Harun ar Rashid, and the talk fell on gluttons. I said to him, "Sualiman, son of 'Abd al Malik, was most gluttonous. When the cook brought him a roast, he rushed at it and took it in his sleeve." Ar Rashid replied, "How learned you are, Asma'i, in anecdotes of people. Some days past, I chanced on a garment of Sulaiman's, and I found the mark of grease on its sleeves, I (might have) thought him a doctor!" Asma'i said, "Then he ordered one of those garments (to be given) to me." It is said that Sulaiman, one day put on green clothes and a green turban, and looked in the glass. Then he said, "I am a proper sovereign." One of his maidservants looked at him, and he said, "At what are you looking?" She replied :

"You would be a lovely thing were you immortal, but there is no immortality for man."

In what I know of you lie none of the human faults, save that you are perishable."

He died within a week, and his death was in the year 99. Then ruled after him 'Umar, son of 'Abd al 'Aziz son of Marwan. When Sulaiman, son of 'Abd al Malik, was ill with his fatal illness, he resolved to have the oath of allegiance taken to one of his sons. But one of his friends forbade him, saying to him, "Commander of the Faithful, one of the safeguards of the Caliph in his grave is that he entrust the people to the custody of an upright man." (92) Sulaiman replied, "'With God's help,' I will do so." Then he<sup>1</sup> consulted him<sup>2</sup> about 'Umar, son of 'Abd al 'Aziz, and he<sup>2</sup> advised him<sup>1</sup> to have him<sup>3</sup> and praised him<sup>3</sup> to him.<sup>1</sup> So Sulaiman wrote a deed of succession in favour of 'Umar, son of 'Abd al 'Aziz, sealed it, summoned his household, and said, "Take the oath of allegiance to him whom I have nominated as successor in this deed."

<sup>1</sup> Sulaiman.    <sup>2</sup> The counsellor.    <sup>3</sup> 'Umar.

They did not know who he was, and took the oath of allegiance. Then when he<sup>1</sup> died, that man who had  
 176 advised him to have 'Umar, son of 'Abd al Aziz, collected them,—he had hidden the death of Sulaiman from them,—and said to them, "Take the oath of allegiance a second time." They did so, and, when he saw that he had confirmed the matter, he informed them of the death of Sulaiman. 'Umar, son of 'Abd al 'Aziz, was one of the best Caliphs, learned, ascetic, religious, godly and pious. His conduct was approved, and he died much praised. It was he who abolished the cursing of 'Ali, whom the Umayyads used to curse in the pulpits. 'Umar, son of 'Abd al 'Aziz, said, "My father, 'Abd al 'Aziz, son of Marwan, used to pass on in his address, speaking rapidly. When he came to mention 'Ali, he used to stammer." He added, "I spoke to him about that, and he replied, "My dear son, You have noticed my doing this?" I said, "Yes." He answered, "My dear son, know that if the people knew about 'Ali, son of Abu Talib, what we know of him, they would abandon us for his descendants." When 'Umar, son of 'Abd al Aziz, became Caliph, he abolished the cursing, and substituted God's words. "Indeed, God has commanded justice, right-doing and generosity to relations; He has forbidden wickedness, blameworthy actions, and injustice. He exhorts you, perchance you will take heed." The poets praised him for this, and one of those who praised him for it was 'Azzah's Kuthayyir, when he said:

"You came to rule and spoke not ill of 'Ali. You wronged not an innocent man, and followed not sinful speech.

You spoke, proving your speech true by your deeds, and every Moslem was pleased.

The world has arrayed itself as a 'lovely'<sup>1</sup> arrays her clothes, and bares to you her cheek and arm. Sometimes she glances with a love sick eye, (sometimes) smiles from (teeth) like strung pearls,

<sup>1</sup> Reading haluk for huluk as suggested by Amar.

But you recoil from her shuddering, as though she  
gave you a draught compounded of poison and  
colocynth,

And you are already on the summit of its<sup>1</sup> greatest  
hill, and, in its<sup>2</sup> sea, as brimful in a raging torrent."

The Sharif ar Rida al Musawi elegized him as follows :

"Son of 'Abd al 'Aziz, if the eye (could) weep for an  
Umayyad 'knight' it would surely weep for you.  
You rescued us from cursing and insult, and if reward  
were possible, I would reward you.

(98) I can only say you were good even if your house  
were neither good nor pure.

The convent of Simeon, may the morning rain clouds  
not pass you by, your (buried) dead is the best of  
those dead of the family of Marwan."

The reference was to him when they said, "The scarred  
and the retrencher were the most just of the Umayyads."  
Mention of the retrencher will come later, if God will.  
His death was at the convent of Simeon in the year 101.  
Then ruled after him Yazid, son of 'Abd al Malik. He  
was the black sheep of the Umayyads, madly in love with  
two girls, one of whom was called Sallamah, and the other  
Habbabah. With these two he spent all his time. They  
say Habbabah one day sang,

"'Twixt my collar bone and uvula is a (feeling) of heat  
which will not die down, nor be swallowed and  
cool down."

178 Yazid, son of 'Abd al Malik stretched out his hand as  
though to fly. She said, "Commander of the Faithful,  
we have need of you." He answered, "I will surely fly  
away." She replied, "In whose charge will you leave  
the nation?" "In yours," he answered, and kissed her  
hand. One of the servants came out, saying, 'No luck  
to you',<sup>2</sup>—how foolish you are!" Look at this and at  
his father, 'Abd al Malik, when the latter went out to

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the world's.

<sup>2</sup> Lit., may your eye be hot (with tears).

fight Musa'b, son of az Zubair, and 'Atikah, daughter of Yazid, son of Mu'awiyah, restrained him, how he paid no attention to her, and cited those two verses already quoted in the life of 'Abd al Malik, son of Marwan. Yazid's rule did not last long, nor did it comprise conquests or battles meriting mention. He died in the year 105, through amatory indulgence. His brother Hisham, son of 'Abd al Malik, ruled after him. Hisham was miserly,—most miserly,—but he was abundantly sensible, patient and chaste. His reign lasted long, and included several battles. One of its famous battles was the killing of Zaid, 'great great grandson' of Abu Talib. An account of the killing of 'this' Zaid, the Imam of the Zaidites. Zaid was, of the 'holy' family, one of the most learned, ascetic, pious, brave, religious and generous. Unceasingly he aspired to the Caliphate, thinking himself to deserve it, and this idea continually recurred to him, to appear in his facial expressions, and to escape from his tongue till the time of Hisham son of 'Abd al Malik, who suspected him of having a deposit belonging to

(94) Khalid, son of 'Abd Allah al Qasri, Amir of Kufah. So he sent him to Yusuf, son of 'Umar, its Amir at that time, and the latter made him take an oath that he had no property belonging to Khalid, then he let him go free. He went out to go to Madinah and the people followed him, and he said to him, "Whither are you going?" You have 100,000 swords which we will wield on your behalf, and with us are only a small band of the Umayyads. If a single 'section' of us were to attack them, under God, they would be enough for them." With this (talk) and its like, they inspired him with ambition, but he said to them, "Men, I fear your deceit, for you acted as you did to my grandfather Husain," and he refused them. But they replied, "We conjure you by God not to return; we will devote our lives to your service, and we will give you such oaths, promises and engagements that you will believe them. For we hope that you will be victorious and that this time will be the time in which the Umayyads will be destroyed." They did not stop (urging) him, till they

had made him return. When he returned to Kufah, the Shi'ites came to him one after another to take the oath of allegiance, till his nominal rolls reckoned 15,000 Kufans, excluding the men of the two cities,<sup>1</sup> Basrah, Wasit, Mosul, Khurasan, Rayy, Jurjan and Mesopotamia. They stayed at Kufah for some months, then, when Zaid's preparations were complete, and 'royal honours' waved over his head, he said, "Praise be to God, Who has perfected my religion for me. I would be ashamed to come to His Messenger to-morrow at the cistern<sup>2</sup> if I had not ordered his people to a good deed and forbidden them from a wrong one." When the people had gathered round Zaid, he 'came out into the open,' and declared war on his opponents. Yusuf, son of 'Umar collected a force against him, and went out against him. Each of the two of them got his men in order, the two parties met, and a violent contest between them took place. The adherents of Zaid separated from him and deserted him. He remained in a small group, showed great gallantry, fought valiantly, till an arrow struck him, hitting him in the forehead. He asked for a blacksmith, who took out the arrow from his forehead, but his life came with it and he died immediately. His friends dug (a grave) for him in a streamlet and buried him therein, making the water to flow over the grave, fearing that they might mutilate him. When Yusuf, son of 'Umar, Amir of Kufah, was victorious, he sought the grave of Zaid and did not know where it was. But a slave pointed it out to him, he dug it up, extracted him and crucified him. He remained for a while crucified, then was burnt, and his ashes were strewn in the Euphrates. God have mercy on him and curse those who did him injustice, deprived him of his rights,—he passed (over) a wronged martyr. In his time propagandists of the 'Abbasids spread over the Eastern Provinces, and the Shi'ites made moves in secret, and the armies of Hisham raided the Turks across the river.<sup>3</sup> The victory lay with

<sup>1</sup> Meccah and Madinah.

<sup>2</sup> i.e., where the Prophet gives his people drink on the day of resurrection.

<sup>3</sup> i.e., the Oxus.

181 (95) his armies, then after that Khaqan was killed. Walid, son of Yazid, son of 'Abd al Malik, ruled after him. He was one of the 'knights' of the Umayyads, one of the handsomest, bravest, most generous, and violent of them. He was addicted to sport, drink and song. He was a good poet, who composed good verses on lovers' quarrels, dalliance and the description of wine. One of his best poems was the one wrote to Hisham, son of 'Abd al Malik, who had resolved to depose<sup>4</sup> him. When Hisham saw Walid's addiction to forbidden things and his intentness on pleasures, he wished the Caliphate for his son, wished him to abdicate, spoke against him and threatened him. Walid, son of Yazid, wrote to him :

" You have disowned the kindness of your helper ; had you been grateful for it, the Merciful with his excellence and grace would have rewarded you, I see you building hard on my estate. If you were a resolute man you would destroy what you have built.

I see you gathering hatred for those who follow, woe to them when you die for the ill you have gathered.

I seem to see them on that day; the most they can say is ' would that . . . , ' when ' would that . . . ' is no use."

People have stolen his ideas and put them in their own poetry ; one of those who stole his ideas was Abu Nuwas who took his ideas in describing wine. It is told of Walid, son of Yazid, that he opened the Koran to take an augury.

182 There came out, " They asked victory (from God) and every obstinate tyrant was deceived." He threw it down and shot arrows at it, saying :

" You threaten me as an obstinate tyrant. Good, I (will be) that obstinate tyrant.

When you come to your Lord on the day of resurrection, say, ' Lord, al Walid has torn me to bits '."

He only survived a short while after that till he was mur-

<sup>4</sup> i.e., from the succession.



dered. The reason of his murder was that, before the Caliphate he was, as we have described, with regard to play, drink, and committing forbidden sins. When the Caliphate became his, he only increased addiction to pleasure, and intentness on forbidden things. To that he joined the grave fault of annoying the senior members of his family, ill-using them, and estranging them. With his principal subjects, they united against him, attacked him and murdered him. Yazid, son of Walid, son of 'Abd al Malik, was charged with this, and this was in the year 126. Yazid, son of Walid, son of 'Abd al Malik, ruled after him. He displayed devotion, but it used to be said he was a believer in free will. He was named (96) the retrencher, because he retrenched the stipends of the people of the Hijaz, which Walid, son of Yazid son of 'Abd al Malik had increased for them. For this reason he was named the Retrencher. When the oath of allegiance was taken to him as Caliph, he addressed the people, and made them an excellent speech, which I record here (183) on account of its excellence. He addressed them, mentioned Walid, son of Yazid, and his impiety, saying, "His conduct was bad and he was addicted to acts forbidden by God, so I killed him," adding, "People, I promise you not to put stone upon stone, nor brick upon brick, nor to dig out a canal, nor to store up wealth. I will not transfer wealth from one region to another, before I have safeguarded its frontiers and the needs of its inhabitants adequately. But anything surplus to this, I will transfer to the region which is adjacent to it. I will not shut my door 'in your faces,' you shall have your salaries each year and your wages each month, so that the most distant of you shall be the same as the nearest of you. If I fulfil my promise to you, you owe 'complete obedience' and loyal help. But, if I do not, you may depose me, unless I repent. If you know of any one of recognised integrity who will, of his own accord, give you what I have freely offered to you, and you wish to take the oath of allegiance to him, I will be the first to take the oath to him with you. No obedience is due to a creature in-

volving disobedience to the Creator." I maintain that this speech is good in relation to that time, and to the standard of its contemporaries, for these conditions of meriting leadership were acknowledged by them. But, nowadays, if a ruler were to boast of not digging a canal, nor putting stone upon stone, nor to invite his subjects to appoint a ruler other than himself, he would surely  
 184 be accounted a fool, and, according to their standards, to deserve that another than himself be made ruler. In that period, the Umayyad 'organisation' began to fall into disorder, and the 'Abbasid power to rise, and the propagandists to be despatched to the (Provincial) capitals. He died in the year 126. His brother, Ibrahim, son of Walid, son of 'Abd al Malik, son of Marwan, ruled after him. Those days were days of civil strife. The Umayyad 'organisation' had already collapsed, and, when Yāzid, son of Walid, son of 'Abd al Malik died, the oath of allegiance was taken to his brother Ibrahim, but ineffectively. Some greeted him as Caliph, others as Amir, often others would greet him with neither. His rule fell into chaos and he lasted for seventy days, when Marwan, son of Muhammad, son of Marwan, attacked and deposed him. The oath of allegiance was taken to the latter, and he occupied the throne of the kingdom, but that was after campaigns, civil strife and battles enough to turn a baby's hair white. Marwan, son of Muhammad, son of Marwan,  
 (97) ruled after him. He was the last of the Umayyad Caliphs, and from him the power passed to the 'Abbasids. He was called "al Ja'di,"<sup>1</sup> and he was also called "the Ass." He was nicknamed "the ass,"—as they say,—because of his endurance in war. He was brave, shrewd and crafty. His time was one of civil strife and tumult. His rule had not lasted long before the 'Abbasid armies routed him and pursued him to Egypt. He was killed in a village  
 185 called Busir, one of the villages of Upper Egypt. That was in the year 132. In his time, 'Abd Allah, son of Mu'awiyah, son of 'Abd Allah, son of Ja'far, son of Abu

<sup>1</sup> After a teacher of his, said to have been an adherent to the doctrine of free will,

Talib, revolted. A brief account of that. When the Umayyad 'organisation' collapsed, and the oath of allegiance was taken to Marwan, civil strife broke out among the people, and their opinions differed. Each man held his own view, and formed a school of thought of his own. There was in Kufah a descendant of Ja'far at Tayyar, named 'Abd Allah, 'great great grandson' of Abu Talib. He was eminent and a poet, and he became ambitious for power. The Kufans saw the disorder in Damascus, and the collapse of the Umayyad organisation, so they came to this 'Abd Allah, and took the oath of allegiance to him. Many collected round him, then the Amir of Kufah attacked them at once and fought them with the forces he had. The two sides resisted one another for some time, but, in the end, the Kufans asked the Amir of Kufah for themselves and for 'Abd Allah, 'great great grandson' of Ja'far, a safe conduct to enable them to go whithersoever they wished. The Amir of Kufah and those with him were tired of the struggle and gave them the safe conduct. 'Abd Allah went to Madain, crossed the Tigris, took Hulwan and its vicinity, then went to Persia, and conquered that hilly region, Hamadhan, Isfahan, and Rayy. Some Hashimites joined him, and he remained there a long time. Abu Muslim of Khurasan had become extremely strong. He attacked this 'Abd Allah and killed him, then the 'Abbasid dynasty appeared. Then the 'Abbasid dynasty appeared and its propaganda was made openly. An account of the transfer of sovereignty from the Umayyads to the 'Abbasids. Before going deeply into that a preface is necessary containing an account of the beginning of Abu Muslim of Khurasan. He was the hero of the Abbasid dynasty, its chief propagandist, and the means of (its) victory. An account of the beginning of Abu Muslim of Khurasan, and his origin. His origin is much disputed, and it is useless to discuss it at great length. He is said to have been a freeman, descended from Buzurjmihr, and to have been born in Isfahan, to have grown up in Kufah, and to have attached himself to Ibrahim, the Imam, son of Muhammad, son of

'Ali, son of 'Abd Allah, son of 'Abbas, who changed his name and patronymic to Abu Muslim. He brought him up, and taught him, till there happened to him what everyone knows. Others say that he was a slave, who passed (from one master to another) in servitude till he came to Ibrahim the Imam. When the latter saw him, his behaviour and mentality pleased him, he bought him from his master, brought him up, taught him and began to send him as a messenger to his faction and to his propagandists in Khurasan. Thus he continued till there happened to him what everyone knows. When his power grew strong, he himself claimed that he was the son of Salit, the son of 'Abd Allah, the son of 'Abbas. This is the place to give a brief account of a story concerning this Salit. 'Abd Allah, son of 'Abbas, had a maidservant, with whom he had connection on several occasions, then he abandoned her for a period. But she made advances to a slave, who lay with her, and through him she conceived a boy she named Salit. Then she attributed him to 'Abd Allah, son of 'Abbas, who disowned him and did not recognise him. Salit grew up and, to 'Abd Allah, son of 'Abbas, he was the most hateful person in creation. When 'Abd Allah died, Salit disputed his estate with his heirs. To lessen the prestige of 'Ali, son of 'Abd Allah, son of 'Abbas, pleased the Umayyads, so they helped him, and instructed the judge of Damascus secretly to bias his judgment in his favour; he gave judgment in his favour with regard to the estate. In this connection occurred several events for the recounting of which this is not the place. Abu Muslim, when his power grew strong, claimed that he was descended from this Salit. Then Abu Muslim went on a mission for Ibrahim, the Imam, to Khurasan, made propaganda for him in secret, and continued doing this till the propaganda became open and the matter was complete. Another introduction,—without going deeply into it. God Most High has said, "We will distribute these days<sup>1</sup> in turn amongst the people." A wise man condoled with a ruler on his lost realm, saying, "If it

<sup>1</sup> i.e., power in them.

had stayed in the hands of another than you, it would not have come to you." Know that this dynasty was one of the greatest dynasties. It administered the world by an administration combining religion with the state. The  
 88 best and most upright people used to obey it from religious  
 (92) motives, and others out of fear, or through self interest. The Caliphate and the sovereignty remained in it for the space of 600 years, then dynasties attacked it, such as the Buwaihid dynasty,—the importance of which you know and of which the principal hero was 'Adud al Daulah Fannakhusru ;—the Saljuqid dynasty,—which included a man like Tughrabak ;—the Khwarazmshah dynasty,—which included a man like 'Ala ad din and the parade state of the army of which comprised 400,000 troops of the line; the Fatimid dynasty in Egypt,—which sent out an army with one of their slaves, called Jauhar, more numerous than had ever been seen, so that their poet, Muhammad, son of Hani, the Maghribi, said of it :

" No army before the army of Jauhar trotted and walked its chargers by (files of) tens ; "

And the " dissenters " revolted in its period in numerous masses and great swarms. All that, yet their rule was continuous, nor was any dynasty strong enough to strip them of power, nor to efface their traces. Nay rather, one of these above mentioned rulers used to collect, muster and lead great armies till he arrived at Baghdad, and, when he arrived, he would seek an audience of the Caliph, and, when he was given it, would kiss the ground before him, and the utmost favour he sought from him was that the  
 189 Caliph would ' present ' him with a standard and robe of honour. If the Caliph did so, the ruler would kiss the ground before him, and walk by his stirrup afoot, with his horsecloth under his arm, as the Sultan Mas'ud did with Mustarshid. There occurred between him and Mas'ud estrangement leading to open war. Mustarshid went out with a numerous army, and accompanied by the chief men of the dynasty. He and the Sultan Mas'ud met outside Maraghah. They fought for a time, then, when the dust

had cleared away, the adherents of Mustarshid had been routed, and the army of Mas'ud was victorious. The dust cleared away, and the Caliph stood firm on horseback, the Koran in his hand, and the readers of the Koran, the judges and 'ministers' around him. Not one of them had fled, but only the fighting men ! When the Sultan Mas'ud saw them, he sent someone to lead the Caliph's beast, made him enter a tent already pitched for him, took the chief men of the dynasty and imprisoned them in a fortress near those regions. Then they looted everything that was with the Caliph's army. After some days the Sultan met the Caliph, rebuked him for what he had done, and then peace was made between them and concluded. The Caliph went on horseback to a great pavilion specially pitched for him by the Sultan, and when the Caliph mounted, the Sultan Mas'ud took the horsecloth and walked by his stirrup. Then there occurred the murder of Mastarshid, as we shall relate hereafter. All these dynasties attacked the 'Abbasids, but not  
 190 one of them was strong enough to strip them of power,  
 (100) nor to efface their traces. They had, in the hearts of their people, a position not approached by that of any other in the world. So much so that, when the Sultan Hulaku conquered Baghdad and wanted to kill the Caliph, Abu Ahmad 'Abd Allah al Must'asim, they told him that, if the Caliph were killed, the order of the world would be deranged, the sun veiled, the rain and crops withheld. He was terrorstruck at that, then asked a learned man as to the real truth about it. That learned man told him the truth about it, saying, "'Ali, son of Abu Talib, was certainly, of all the world, the most deserving of this Caliphate. Then he was murdered and these fearsome things did not happen. So, too, Husain, and so, too, the grandfather of this Caliph were murdered and underwent all kinds of ill usage. Yet the sun was not veiled, nor rain withheld." When he<sup>1</sup> heard that his apprehension disappeared, and that learned man excused himself for speaking thus on the grounds that "Dread of the Sultan was great, and his severity to be feared. Before him I dared not speak other

<sup>1</sup> Hulaku.

than the truth." But this was the belief of the people about the 'Abbasids. None of the dynasties was strong enough to deprive them of their realm, nor to efface their traces, save this conquering dynasty, may God spread its well-doing and exalt its might. When the Sultan Hulaku conquered Baghdad and killed the Caliph, he effaced the traces of the 'Abbasids entirely, and altered all their fundamental principles, till whoever mentioned the name of the 'Abbasids was in danger for doing so. Here is the place for an anecdote told me by Naṣr al Mulayyasi, the Ethiopian, a servant of the Sultan, may God extend (the area of) his justice and exalt his rank in both worlds. Formerly, he belonged to the Caliph Musta'sim. He said, "When Baghdad was taken, they brought me out, and I was a young man, in the company of the servants. For some days we were attached to the service of the Mongol emperor. When we were at a distance from Baghdad, the Sultan Hulaku one day caused us to be brought before him. We were in the livery of the Caliph's household. Then he said, "Formerly you belonged to the Caliph, to-day you are mine. You should serve well and honestly, and eradicate from your hearts the Caliph's name,—that is a thing 'dead' and gone. If you prefer to change livery and assume our livery, it will be better." He added, "Then we said, 'We are entirely at your service,' then we changed our livery and assumed their livery." An account of the start of the 'Abbasid dynasty. It is related that the Messenger of God let fall in his noble speech words amounting to the good tidings of a Hashimid dynasty. People assert that he said, "It will come to one of my descendants," and people assert that he said to his paternal uncle 'Abbas, "It will come to one of your children," and when he brought him his son 'Abd Allah, he pronounced the call to prayer in his ear, and spat in his mouth, saying, "God make him wise in the faith and learned in the interpretation."<sup>1</sup> Then he handed him to his father, saying to him, "Take to you the father of sovereigns." Whoever asserts this says, "The 'Abbasid dynasty is the dynasty happily

<sup>1</sup> Allegorical, of the Korean.

<sup>102</sup> announced by these (traditions." By the people the Umayyad dynasty was disliked, cursed and censured, (being) tyrannical and addicted to forbidden sins and evil practices. People from the (provincial) capitals used to expect this dynasty morning and evening. Muhammad, son of 'Ali, son of Abu Talib, known as son of Hanafiyyah, was believed by the people to be the head of the dynasty after the murder of his brother Husain,—especially by the Imamite sect, for their belief was in the Imamate of 'Ali, son of Husain Zain al Abidin,<sup>1</sup> and that of his children in succession to al Qa'im Muhammad, son of Hasan. When Muhammad, son of al Hanafiyyah, died, he made his son, Abu Hashim, 'Abd Allah, his heir. Abu Hashim was one of the 'holy house,' and it chanced that he went to Damascus to visit Hisham, son of 'Abd al Malik. Hisham treated him well and generously. Later, seeing his eloquence, especially for leadership and knowledge, he became envious and afraid of him and sent to him,—after he had returned to Medinah,—someone who gave him poison in milk. When he realised this, he turned aside to Muhammad, son of 'Ali son of 'Abd Allah son of al 'Abbas, who was living at Humaimah in Syria, told him that he was a dying man, and made him his heir. He entrusted to him a number of his partisans who were in his company, gave him charge of them, and then died. Muhammad, son of 'Ali son of 'Abd Allah, from this day desired the Caliphate, and began to spread abroad his propagandists in secret. So the matter continued till he died, and left his sons, the number of whom included Ibrahim, the Imam, as Saffah, and al Mansur. Ibrahim, the Imam, took charge after his father, and multiplied the despatch of propagandists to the frontier regions,—especially to Khurasan,—for they had much more confidence in the people of Khurasan than in the other inhabitants of (provincial) capitals. The people of Hijaz were few, those of Kufah and Basrah feared by the 'holy house,' on account of their desertion, deception and bloodshed of ' 'Ali,' Hassan and Husain. The Syrians and Egyptians were fond of the

<sup>1</sup> i.e., adornment of the servants (of God).



Umayyads, love of whom was rooted in their hearts, so none of the people of the (provincial) capitals remained for them to rely on except those of Khurasan. It used to be said that the black flags of victory for the 'Holy house' would emerge from Khurasan. So Ibrahim, the Imam, sent to Khurasan a number of propagandists who were its senior men and squires. They accepted him and made propaganda for him in secret. Finally he sent Abu Muslim, who went there and collected a body of men. All this was in secret, and the propaganda was hidden and had not yet come into the open. In the time of Marwan "the Ass," the son of Muhammad, the son of Marwan, the last of the Umayyad Caliphs, disturbances abounded, wrongdoing grew, civil strife arose, and the Umayyad 'organisation' collapsed. They disagreed among themselves, some fighting others, Abu Muslim made open the 'Abbasid propaganda, and all of that view in Khurasan collected round him. He led a numerous army with which to combat the Amir of Khurasan, Nasr, son of Sayyar. When Nasr heard of Abu Muslim's position and his forces, that frightened him and he wrote to Marwan, "the Ass" :

"I see the gleam of fire in the ashes, and it will soon become ablaze ;

If the wise do not put it out, its fuel will be corpses and heads !

Fire is kindled by two sticks, and the start of war is talk ;

I said in wonder, ' Would I know whether the Umayyads are awake or asleep '."

Marwan wrote to him, " The man on the spot sees what the absent men sees not. Stop this disease which has appeared amongst you." Nasr, son of Sayyar, said to his friends, " Your master has told you that he has no help." News kept on coming uninterruptedly to Marwan on this subject, his 'organisation' collapsed in 'direct proportion,' and his rule weakened daily. Finally, he heard that the man, in whose favour the propagandists

were 'working,' was Ibrahim, son of Muhammad, son of Ali, son of 'Abd Allah, son of 'Abbas, brother of as Saffah and al Mansur. He sent for him, seized him, and took him to Harran where he imprisoned him. Later he poisoned him in prison and he died. Then wars and battles occurred, between Abu Muslim and Nasr, son of Sayyar, together with other Amirs of Khurasan, in which victory lay with the blacks, i.e., the forces of Abu Muslim. They were called the blacks because the apparel they preferred in the 'Abbasid interest was black in colour. Look at the

(108) power of God Most High. When He wishes a thing He prepares causes thereto, and when He wishes a thing, there is no opposer of His command. When He determined to transfer rule to the 'Abbasids, He prepared a number of causes for them. Ibrahim, the Imam, son of Muhammad, son of 'Ali, son of 'Abd Allah, son of 'Abbas, was in the Hijaz or in Syria, sitting on his prayer mat, occupied with himself, his religious duties and the welfare of his family. He had no worldly wealth. But the people of Khurasan were fighting on his behalf, devoting their lives and property to his service, though most of them did not know him, nor could put a name to him. Consider Ibrahim, the Imam, in that condition of isolation in his house and abstraction from the world, in the Hijaz or Syria, whilst he had an army as mighty as this one in Khurasan devoting its lives to his service, without their costing him anything, nor his giving any of them a mount nor weapons. On the contrary they paid tribute to him, and brought to him the annual tax. When God Most High decreed the desertion of Marwan and the destruction of the Umayyad rule, Marwan was the acknowledged Caliph, in possession of

196 troops, money, weapons and everything in the world, but people left him, his rule weakened and his 'organisation' collapsed, and continued to disintegrate till he was routed and killed. When Abu Muslim had conquered Khurasan, obtained control over its districts, and his power had grown strong he went to 'Iraq with his armies. When Marwan seized Ibrahim, the Imam, and imprisoned him at Harran, his two brothers, as Saffah and al Mansur, with

a number of their relations, grew afraid and fled towards Kufah, where they had partisans, including Abu Salmah Hafṣ, son of Sulaiman, the vinegar seller. He was one of the most important partisans in Kufah; and later became minister to as-Saffah, who afterwards killed him, as will be related when mention is made of the 'ministers.' Abu Salmah, the vinegar seller, made a house available for them in Kufah and ordered that it be put at their disposal. He himself undertook to serve them and kept their affairs secret. The partisans assembled round him, their powers grew great, then Abu Muslim with the armies from Khurasan arrived at Kufah, came to the 'Abbasids and said, "Which of you is the son of al Harithiyyah?" al Mansur replied, "This," and pointed to as-Saffah,—whose mother was al Harithiyyah. Then Abu Muslim greeted him as Caliph, and as-Saffah went out with his brothers, uncles, relations and influential partisans, preceded by Abu Muslim, to the congregational mosque. He prayed, mounted the pulpit, made public the claim,<sup>1</sup> addressed the people, and the oath of allegiance was taken to him as Caliph. That

197 was in the year 132, and this was the beginning of the  
 (104) 'Abbasid dynasty, and the end of the Umayyads. Then as Saffah encamped outside Kufah, and people came to him from the (Provincial) capitals to take the oath of allegiance to him. When the people had collected about him and his power waxed strong; he invited one of his relations to fight Marwan, "the Ass." His paternal uncle, 'Abd Allah, son of 'Ali, who was one of the 'Abbasid heroes, accepted this invitation. 'Abd Allah, son of 'Ali, proceeded against Marwan, and met him at the Zab. With Marwan were 120,000 troops of the line, whilst 'Abd Allah had less than that, but God helped the latter in many ways, and completely deserted the former, so reflect and consider. An account of the battle of the Zab, of the desertion of Marwan and his flight. When Merwan, the Ass, and 'Abd Allah, son of 'Ali, met at the Zab, Marwan said to one of his adherents, "If to-day's sun sets without their fighting us, the Caliphate is ours, and we shall hand

<sup>1</sup> i.e., to Caliphate.

it on to the end of time, till (the coming of) the Messiah." So he ordered his adherents to refrain from fighting, and then sent to 'Abd Allah, son of 'Ali, asking for a truce. But 'Abd Allah, said, "He is lying. The sun shall not set before I trample him under my cavalry, if God will." One of the remarkable coincidences was that a relation in-law of Marwan charged a division of the troops of 'Abd Allah, son of 'Ali, but Marwan (would have) held him back and abused him, but he refused. Battle was joined, and 'Abd Allah, son of 'Ali, ordered his adherents to fight it out. They knelt on their knees presenting their spears. 'Abd Allah, son of 'Ali, called out, "Lord, till when shall he be murdered for Thy sake," adding, "Men of Khurasan, vengeance for Ibrahim, the Imam." The struggle grew fierce, but, when Marwan ordered a section of his troops to do anything, they said, "Tell another section." His affairs reached such a pass that he said to the commander of his bodyguard, "Dismount," and the latter replied, "I will certainly not expose myself to destruction." Marwan answered him, "I will punish you," and threatened him. He replied, "I wish you had the ability to do so." Then Marwan saw the slackness of his adherents and the energy of those of 'Abd Allah, son of 'Ali, so he placed much gold before the people, saying "Fight on, men, and this money is yours." But the people began to snatch the money and take it bit by bit. One of the people said to Marwan, "The people have snatched the money, and we are not sure that they will not go off with it. So he ordered his son to go among the rear ranks of the army and to kill anyone he found with any of the money. His son retired his standard to execute his order, and the people seeing the standard being retired, cried out, "Flight, flight," and fled,—Marwan also. They crossed the Tigris, and the drowned outnumbered the killed. 'Abd Allah, some of 'Ali, recited,

(105) "When we divided the sea for you and we saved you ;  
 100 and we drowned the family of Pharaoh, whilst you were looking on." Then he transferred to Marwan's camp, looted what was in it and stayed in it for seven days.

An account of the killing of Marwan, "the Ass." Marwan passed on in his flight till he reached Mosul, but its inhabitants cut the bridge and prevented him crossing. His adherents shouted out, "Inhabitants of Mosul, this is the Commander of the Faithful who wishes to cross," but the inhabitants of Mosul called back, "You lie, the Commander of the Faithful would not fly!" And they abused him, saying, "Praise be to God Who has brought us people from our Prophet's house." When he heard that, he went to Balad, crossed the Tigris, and came to Harran, thence to Damascus, and thence to Egypt. 'Abd Allah, son of 'Ali, followed him, sending some of his adherents after him. He saw them in a village of Upper Egypt, called Busir. Marwan came out to attack them by night and fought with them. Their commander said to the 'Abbasid troops, "If we reach daybreak and they see how few we are, they will destroy us, and not one of us will escape, so fight it out with them." He broke the scabbard of his sword, and his followers did the same, attacked them and put them to flight. A man attacked Marwan and speared him, without knowing him, and laid him low. Some one cried out. "The Commander of the Faithful has fallen," and they ran up to him. A certain Kufan got to him first, and cut off his head. Then the head was  
 200 emptied, and its tongue, which a cat there ate, cut out. The head was taken to as-Saffah, and met him in Kufah. When he saw it, he prostrated himself, then raised his head, and said, "Praise be to God Who has given us the victory over you, and put you in my power, and has not left (unsatisfied) the vengeance I desired on you." He quoted as apposite :

"Were they to drink my blood, the drinker would not be slaked, nor does their blood slake my anger."

Thereafter as-Saffah's rule was unchallenged.

201 *The Empire of the 'Abbasids, which succeeded to that of the Umayyads.*

Know that the rule of the Abbasids was one of trickery,

(108) political manoeuvre and deceit, and that there appertained to it more of opportunism and subterfuge than of force and strength, especially in its later period, for those of them who came at the end abandoned force, strength and intrepidity and had recourse to opportunism and trickery. The words of Kashajim,—referring to the pacifism of soldiers and the bellicosity of clerks, and their mutual quarrels,—illustrate this.

“ Lucky soldiers, with leisure in which they spend  
 their time at ease,  
 How many of them lead a peaceful life, never charg-  
 ing to the attack, nor advancing against a resolute  
 foeman ?  
 Eve and morn fitting to baldric a sword whole of edge,  
 not notched,  
 But the swords of the men of the pen are never dry  
 of blood.”

202 On this a poet said, when Mutawakkil killed his minister,  
 Muhammad, son of Abdu'l Malik az-Ziyat,

“ When it was said ‘ the minister has been killed,’ (my)  
 heart almost fluttered away through fear.  
 Commander of the faithful, you have killed a person  
 on whom your millstone used to pivot,  
 Softly ! children of al 'Abbas, softly ! hearts are  
 sacrificed through your trickery.”

Nevertheless, their rule was prolific in good deeds, abundantly generous. In it the markets of the sciences were well established, the wares of letters sold well, the rites of the faith were honoured, charity was bountiful, the world populous, the decencies observed, and the frontier kept inviolate. This continued so till its later period, when control was dissipated, confusion supervened, and authority was transferred, as will be explained in its place, if God Most High will. This is the time to begin mention of the Caliphs one by one. The first of their Caliphs to rule was as-Saffah, abu al-'Abbas, 'Abdullah, son of Muhammad, son of 'Ali, son of 'Abdullah, son of al 'Abbas,

son of 'Abdu 'l Mutallib. He was recognised as Caliph in the year 132. He was generous, forbearing, staid, intelligent, accomplished, correct in behaviour, of good character. When he was recognised as Caliph and his authority was made secure, he followed up the remainder of the Umayyads and put them to the sword. One day he was sitting in the Caliph's audience hall with Sulaiman, son of Hisham, son of 'Abdu'l Malik, to whom as-Saffah had been generous. The poet Sadif entered to him and recited to him :

“ Let not what you see in men deceive you, for beneath  
the ribs (lies) a deadly sickness,  
Put to the sword, lift up the whip, till you do not see  
on earth's surface a single Umayyad.”

Sulaiman turned and said, “ You have killed me, old man.” as-Saffah entered, took Sulaiman and killed him. Another poet came to him, after food had already been served, when seventy of the Umayyads were with him, and recited to him :

“ The kingdom has become firmly set on its foundations,  
with the noble princes of the house of al 'Abbas ;  
They sought revenge for Hashim, and slaked it,  
after vicissitudes of time and despair ;  
Forgive not 'Abdu'shshams any slip, and cut down  
every tall palm and (even the) roots ;  
Their humiliation makes them make a show of  
affection, but it to you is like a razor's scrape ;  
That they should be near cushions and thrones has  
irked me and irked others than I,  
Make them descend as God has made them descend  
into the house of shame and damanation.  
Remember where Husain fell and Zaid, also the  
slain near Mihras,  
And the slain who is in Harra resting between  
exile and oblivion.”

One of them turned to him who was by his side and said,  
“ The slave has killed us.” Then as-Saffah gave orders

about them and they were put to the sword till they were killed. The leather carpets of the executioner were spread over them, and he sat above them, eating food and listening to the groans of some of them till all were dead.

The house of al 'Abbas went to extreme lengths in eradicating all traces of the house of Umayyah, even to exhuming their graves in Damascus. They exhumed the grave of Muawiyah, son of Abu Sufyan, and they found nothing therein save a thread as of dust. They exhumed the grave of Yazid, and found therein fragments, as though he were ashes. When their (chief) men were killed and their wealth escheated, he said :

“ House of Umayyah, you have all vanished, and how  
I suffered from you at the start (now) past,  
It pleases the soul that the Fire contains you all ;  
in its blaze you have paid an evil recompense,  
You tried conclusions,—may God not waive your  
slips,—with a lion of the thicket, charging against  
his foes.”

Thereafter the time of as-Saffah was not long ere he died,—  
at al-Anbar in the year 136.

(108) *An account of the state of the ministry in his time.*

205 Before discussing this, it is necessary to preface remarks on this conception, so I will say that the minister is intermediate between the king and his subjects. So it is necessary that his character should contain one half resembling the characteristics of kings, and one half resembling the characteristics of the Commons, so that he may treat each of the two sections with the reception, affection and loyalty appropriate to it. Sincerity is his capital. It is said, “ If the ambassador deceives, planning is useless,” again, “ Sound counsel avails not the belied.” Competence and firmness should be amongst his most important traits, so intelligence, alertness, sagacity and resoluteness are essential in him. He needs must be hospitable and fond of entertaining, thereby to win over the stiff-necked, and to be



thanked by every tongue. Kindness, meekness, firmness in affairs, forbearance, dignity, ability and penetrating speech are further essentials in him. When ar-Nasir made Mu'ayad ud-din Muhammad, son of Baraz ul-Qumiyyi his minister, he invested him with the robe of the ministerial office, then al-Qumiyyi sat in the ministerial 'office,' with all the people before him, and produced from his Highness the Caliph a tiny letter about the size of a little finger, in an-Nasir's handwriting, and read it to the assembly. In it was, "In the name of God The Compassionate The Merciful, Muhammad son of Baraz al-Qumiyyi is our deputy in the land and over men. Whoso obeys him obeys us. Whoso obeys us obeys God. Whoso obeys God, He will cause him to enter Paradise. Whoso disobeys him, disobeys us. Whoso disobeys us, disobeys God. Whoso disobeys God, He will cause him to enter the Fire."

Al-Qumiyyi was enhanced by this memorandum in the eyes of the people; his position dignified, and awe of him established in the hearts (of men). It was only during the dynasty of the 'Abbasids that the principles of the ministry were elaborated and its regulations established, for before that time neither were its principles settled nor its regulations fixed, nay, each single monarch had his followers and entourage, and when anything occurred he sought advice from the intelligent and men of sound commonsense, each one of whom performed the functions of a minister. But when the 'Abbasids ruled, the regulations of the ministry were fixed, and the minister was called by that name. Before that time he was called a secretary or a counsellor. The philologists say that the word 'wazar' means place of refuge or protection, and 'wizr' burden, so that 'wazir'<sup>1</sup> is either taken from the latter, in which case its meaning would be that he shouldered the burden, or it is taken from the former, in which case the meaning is that reference is made and recourse had to his counsel and administrative ability. However the word 'wazir' be derived, it indicates place of refuge and burden. The first minister to hold office

<sup>1</sup> Translated elsewhere by "minister."

for the first 'Abbasid caliph was Hafs son of Sulaiman, father of Salamah al-Khilal. He was a client of the house of Harith, son of Ka'b. It is said that there were reasons for his being nicknamed al-Khilal,—the first of them that his house in Kufah was near the area of the vinegar sellers ; that he used to frequent them and was named from them, as al-Ghazali was named from the cotton-spinners, for he used to frequent them much. As for the naming of al-Ghazali I have seen another reason (adduced). It is said that the giving of alms to the old women who came to the cotton market to sell their cotton was his idea, for he saw their indigence, poverty and scant earnings, took pity on them, gave them alms in plenty, instructed that alms should be given to them, and was named therefrom. The second reason is that he owned a shop in which vinegar was sold, and that he was named from that. The third reason is that he was named from the scabbards of swords, i.e., their sheaths. Abu Salamah was a rich Kufan. He used to expend his wealth on propagandists. The cause of his attachment to the 'Abbasids was his connection by marriage to Bakir, son of Mahan. The latter was a scribe devoted to the interests of Ibrahim the Imam. When death overtook him he said to Ibrahim the Imam, "I have a relation by marriage in Kufah, named Abu Salamah al-Khilal. I have made him my successor in furthering the interests of your propaganda." Then he died, and Ibrahim the Imam wrote to Abu Salamah informing him thereof, and instructing him as to his wishes in the matter of propaganda. Abu Salamah furthered the interests of their propaganda greatly, but, when he had probed the affairs of the 'Abbasids, he resolved to turn away from them to the house of 'Ali. He wrote to three of its principal members,—

207 Ja'far, son of Muhammad as-Sadiq, 'Abdullah al-Mahdi, son of Hasan, son of 'Ali, son of Abu Talib, and 'Umar al-Ashraf, son of Zain al-'Abidin, and sent the letter by a man who was one of their clients, saying to him, "First go to Ja'far, son of Muhammad as-Sadiq. If he replies, then destroy the other two letters. If he

208

does not reply, then go to 'Abdullah al-Mahdi. If he replies, then destroy 'Umar's letter. If he does not reply, then go to 'Umar. The messenger went to Ja'far, son of Muhammad first, and handed to him, the letter of Abu Salamah. But he said, "What have I to do with Abu Salamah, a partisan of others than me?" Then the messenger said to him, "Read the letter." as-Sadiq said (110) to his servant, "Bring the lamp close to me," and he brought it close, and he put the letter in the fire till it was consumed. Then the messenger said, "Will you not reply to it?" He answered, "You have seen the reply." Then the messenger passed on to 'Abdullah al-Mahdi, and gave him the letter. He read it, kissed it, mounted immediately (and went) to as-Sadiq and said. "This is a letter from Abu Salamah, in which he invites me to the Caliphate. It has come by hand of one of our partisans from the people of Khurasan. as-Sadiq answered him, "When became the people of Khurasan your partisans? Did you send Abu Muslim to them? Do you know one of them by his name or by his face? How should they be your partisans, when you do not know them nor they 209 you?" 'Abdullah replied, "It seems you have a purpose in saying this." as-Sadiq answered, "God knows, I owe the giving of good advice to every Muslim, how then should I withhold it from you? Let not vain hopes seduce you, for this empire will be completed in favour of these.<sup>1</sup> A letter similar to that which came to you had already come to me." Then 'Abdullah went away from him displeased. As for 'Umar, son of Zain al-'Abidin, he returned the letter saying, "I do not know its author that I should reply to him." Then Abu Salamah's project was brought to nought, the ('Abbasid) propaganda was completed, and as-Saffah acknowledged Caliph. The story was related to him, he hated Abu Salamah on account of it and killed him. Some account of his biography and death. Abu Salamah was bountiful, generous, hospitable, extravagant, much addicted to elegance in weapons and the stable, eloquent, versed in history, poetry, biography,

<sup>1</sup> i.e., 'Abbasids.

disputation and exegesis, ready in argument, of easy manners, and patent manliness. When as-Saffah was acknowledged Caliph, he made him minister, entrusted affairs to him, handed over to him the offices, and called him the "the minister of the house of Muhammad," though in his heart were different sentiments. as-Saffah feared that, if he killed Abu Salamah, Abu Muslim would take fright and be annoyed, so he proceeded cautiously to that end and wrote a letter to Abu Muslim advising him therein of Abu Salamah's intention against himself of transferring the power from them,<sup>1</sup> and saying to him,<sup>2</sup>

210 "I made you a present of his fault," the inner meaning of the letter required approval of the project to kill Abu Salamah. He sent the letter by his brother al-Mansur. When Abu Muslim read the letter he understood as-Saffah's purpose, and despatched some men of Khurasan who killed Abu Salamah. Then a poet said :

"The minister, the minister of the house of Muhammad  
has perished, may he who hates you become  
minister !

Security<sup>3</sup> has disappeared, how often is joy in what  
you dislike justified."

- (111) Abu Salamah's holding of office ended. They disagree as to his successor. Some say Abu 'ljahm, others Abdu 'Rahman. As for the former he acted as minister to as-Saffah for a while, but when the Caliphate came to al Mansur, the latter had things against him and poisoned him in almond gruel. When he perceived the poison he stood up to go, and Mansur said to him, "Whither ?" He replied, "To where you have sent me, Commander of the Faithful." But as-Suli says that as-Saffah made Khalid, son of Barmak, minister after Abu Salamah. An account of the ministry of Khalid, son of Barmak, and something of his biography. This Khalid was the grandfather of the Barmakids, and in those days the authority of the house of Barmak first emerged and it extended till its

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the 'Abbasids, to the 'Alids, see above.

<sup>2</sup> Abu Muslim.

<sup>3</sup> Play on word 'Salamah.'

<sup>211</sup> collapse in the days of ar-Rashid. Khalid, son of Barmak, was one of the notable men in the 'Abbasid dynasty, of great parts, noble, generous, resolute, and watchful. as-Saffah made him minister, and was attached to him. He used to call him 'minister,' and it was said that every man made minister after Abu Salamah used to shun being called minister, drawing a bad augury from what happened to Abu Salamah. As someone said :

“ The minister, the minister of the house of Muhammad has perished, so may he whom you dislike be minister ! ”

They also said that Khalid, son of Barmak, used to do ministers' work without being called minister. Khalid was in high favour with the Caliphs. It is said that as-Saffah said to him one day, “ Khalid, were you not satisfied till you made a servant of me ? ” Khalid was frightened and said, “ How so, Commander of the Faithful? I am your slave and your servant.” He laughed and replied, “ Raitah my daughter was sleeping with your daughter in one place. I got up in the night and found them both with the coverlet slipped off them so I put it back over them.” Khalid kissed his hand and said, “ The master has earned a reward in respect of his slave and his handmaid.” The visitors at the door of Khalid, son of Barmak, were numerous, the poets praised him, and the people obtained benefits from him. Before that visitors used to be called beggars, but Khalid said, “ I <sup>212</sup> dislike this name for such as these, amongst whom are the nobles and the great,” so he called them visitors, and Khalid was the first who named them thus. One of them said to him, “ In truth we do not know which of your two benefits is the greater to us,—the presents or the name you give us ! ” And it is said that the first to do that was al-Musawir, son of al-Nu'man, in the empire of the Umayyads. When al-Mansur built the city of <sup>(1.2)</sup> Baghdad, his expenses became great, and Abu Ayyub al-Muriyani advised him to demolish the hall of the Persian kings and to use its rubble. al Mansur asked the

advice of Khalid, son of Barmak, about that, and he said, "Do not do it, Commander of the Faithful, for it is a marvel of Islam. When people see it, they know that only an act of Providence could destroy such a building. Besides that, it was a praying place for 'Ali, son of Abu Talib, and the expenses of its demolition will be greater than the advantages accruing," Mansur replied to him, "You only say no, Khalid, because of your inclination to things Persian." Then Mansur ordered its demolition, and a chip of it was demolished. But the expenses of that exceeded the receipts from it, so al-Mansur desisted from its demolition, saying, "We have come round to your view, Khalid, and abandoned demolition of the hall." He replied, "Commander of the Faithful, now I advise its demolition lest people should talk of your being too feeble to demolish that built by another than yourself." But he turned away from him and desisted from its demolition. One of the poets wrote to Khalid, son of Barmak, on the day of the Persian New Year Festival, when the people had given Khalid presents including cups of silver and gold,

213

"Would that I know if we would have any share in you,  
presents to the minister on New Year's Day,  
In the eyes of Khalid, son of Barmak, to give a gift  
would be no great matter of generosity,  
Would I had a silver cup from his presents apart from  
what the Amir may give,  
I only want it for honey wed to money not for the  
urine of an old woman."

Then he ordered him to collect all the silver and gold cups and dishes present before him which amounted to a great sum. When al-Mansur assumed the Caliphate, he confirmed in his ministry, honoured him and consulted him. (The account of) the ministry of the ministers of as-Saffah is concluded, and with its conclusion concludes the account of his reign. Then ruled after him his brother Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, who was acknowledged Caliph in the year 136. Some account of his biography and of the events and battles which befell in his time. al-Mansur

was one of the greatest, the most resolute, the most sensible, the most learned and soundest monarchs. He was a good administrator, dignified,—most dignified,—good natured in private, and one of the most forbearing of men in play or jest. But when he assumed his robes and emerged to public council, his colour changed, his eyes reddened, all his attributes became different. One day he said to his children, “My children, when you see that I have assumed my robes, and emerged to council, then let no one approach me for fear that I may do him some harm. They say that al-Mansur used to wear coarse cloth, sometimes a patched gown. That was quoted to Ja’far, son of Muhammad as-Sadiq, and he said, “Praise be to God, Who afflicted him with personal poverty in his reign.” They say that sport and play or the like of sport and play were never seen in the house of al-Mansur. One of his freedmen recounted, “Once I was standing beside him when he heard a high pitched sound, and he said to me, “See what that sound is.” I looked and it was one of his servants playing on a drum. Around him were a crowd of maidservants, laughing at him. I informed him and he was angry and said, “What kind of thing is a drum?” I described it to him and he replied, “And you, what taught you about the drum?” I answered, “Commander of the Faithful, I saw it in Khurasan.” al-Mansur got up and went to the servant. When the maidservants saw him they scattered, and he ordered the servant’s head to be beaten with the drum, till the drum broke. Then he had him taken out and sold.” al-Mansur was extremely devoted to his son al-Mahdi. When he mulcted anyone for a fault, or escheated anyone’s wealth, he used to set it aside singly in the Treasury, and write on it its owner’s name. When death overtook him, he said to his son al-Mahdi, “My son, I have sorted out everything that I have taken from people for a fault or in confiscation, and I have written the owners’ names on them. When you succeed, return them to their owners so that people may pray for you and love you.” Yazid, son of Umar, son of Hubairah, said, “I have not seen a man more

recourseful in war and peace, nor shrewder, nor more wide awake than al-Mansur. He besieged me for nine months. With me were the best knights of the Arabs. We used every sort of endeavour to get some advantage over his soldiery, but could not, on account of his strict discipline over his soldiers, and his being so wide awake. When he laid siege to me I had not a white hair on my head. Then when that was over I had not a black hair on my head." Know that it was al-Mansur who laid the foundations of the dynasty, organised the kingdom, arranged its fundamental principles, and stabilised its renown. He

(114) invented several things. One of his inventions was that of the relief horse, a thing unknown to the kings who preceded him. The reason for that comes in what follows. Another of his inventions was the canvas tent for summer, a thing unknown to people before him. In summer time the Persian kings used to build a room of mud each day to live in, then on the morrow, they would build another room of mud. al-Mansur was mean. Proverbs were made about his meanness. Others say he was generous, and that when he made the pilgrimage he gave

216 largesse to the folk of the Hijaz, so that they called his year the fruitful year. The truth is that he was a resolute man, who gave when gifts were proper, and refrained when that was proper, but the latter (characteristic) was predominant in him. In his time befell a strange event. Some people from the folk of Khurasan, called the Rawandiyyah, who used to profess metempsychosis and assert that the soul of Adam had transmigrated into So-and-so,—one of their chiefs,—and that their Lord was he who fed them and gave them drink,—i.e., al-Mansur, also that Gabriel was So-and-so of another of (their) men. When they appeared they went to al-Mansur's castle, and perambulated it, saying, "This is the castle of our Lord." Al-Mansur seized their chiefs and of them imprisoned two hundred persons. The remainder were angry, collected together, broke open the prison, and brought out thence their companions. They made for al-Mansur to fight with him. Al-Mansur went out against them on foot, for at



that time there was no mount at his gate, but, after that day, at the gate of the castle, a mount used to be picketed for him, ever standing ready. This became a practice with the Caliphs and rulers after him. When al-Mansur had gone out, a mount was brought to him, which he mounted and attacked them, till they became too numerous for him and almost killed him. Ma'n, son of Za'idah, who was in hiding from al-Mansur, came with his face veiled, stood before al-Mansur without the latter recognising him, and fought valiantly in his defence, showing great prowess. al-Mansur was riding on his mule, the  
217 bridle of which was in the hand of his chamberlain, ar-Rabi'. Ma'n came and said, "Away, for I am worthier than you to (take) this bridle, at this time." al-Mansur said, "He has spoken truly. Hand the bridle to him." He continued fighting till the situation cleared, and he overcame the Rawandiyyah. Then al-Mansur said to him, "Who are you?" He replied, "The object of your search, Commander of the Faithful, Ma'n, son of Za'idah." Then he said, "God has given you safe conduct for yourself, your family and your possessions. Such as you are made much of and treated well." He made him governor of the Yaman. It was al-Mansur who built the city of  
(115) Baghdad. An explanation of how it came to be that Baghdad was built. In the earlier part of their rule al-Mansur had built a city in the district of Kufah, and he named it al-Hashimiyyah. In it took place the conflict with the Rawandiyyah, and he disliked its inhabitants on that account, and because of the adjacency of the folk of Kufah, for he distrusted them in his heart and they used to corrupt his army. So he went out in person to look for himself for a place in which he might dwell and build thereon a city for his dependants, his family and his army. He went down to Jarjarayah, and up to Mosul. Then he despatched a company of wise men, sensible and intelligent, with instructions to look for a site, and they chose for him his city which was named the city of al-Mansur, i.e., that on the western bank, close to the shrines of Musa and al-Jawad. He went there and considered the place by

night and by day, approved it, and built thereon the city. One of the strange coincidences about that was that a monk from the monastery, known to-day as the Byzantine Monastery, asked one of the companions of al-Mansur, 218 "Who wants to build a city in this place?" He answered him, "That man, the Commander of the Faithful, al-Mansur, the people's Caliph." He said, "What is his name?" He replied, "Abdullah." The other said, "Has he any name other than that?" He replied, "Truly, no, except his soubriquet Abu Ja'far, and his nickname al-Mansur." The monk said, "Then go to him and tell him not to fatigue himself by building this city, for we have found in our books that a man, whose name is Miqlas, shall build a city here, that it will be of great importance, and that no other than he can do it." That man went to al-Mansur and told him what the monk had said. Then al-Mansur dismounted, prayed for a long while, and finally said, "In truth, my name used to be Miqlas, and I used to be generally known by that nickname, then it lapsed. That was because, in my youth, there was a robber named Miqlas, about whom proverbs were coined. We had an old woman who brought us up. It chanced that two boys of the school came one day to me, and said, "To-day we are your guests," and I had nothing to spend on them. The old woman had some cotton thread, so I took it and sold it to have something to spend on them. When she knew I had stolen her thread, she named me Miqlas, and I was generally known by that nickname, but it later lapsed. Now I know that I shall build this city." One of the Christian sages drew attention to the excellence of its site, and said, "Commander of the Faithful, you will be on an island between the Tigris and the Euphrates. If any one 219 attacks you, they will be two ditches for your city. Supplies, too, will come to you by the Tigris, now from Diyar Bakr, also from the sea, India, China and Basrah. By the Euphrates, too, from Raqqah and Syria. Again, supplies will come to you from Khurāsan and Persia by the canal Tamurrah. You will be Commander of the Faithful in the midst of rivers. Your enemy will not reach you save

by pontoon or built bridges. If you cut the pontoon or demolish the bridge, your enemy will not reach you. Also you are centrally sited for al Basrah and al Kufah, Wasit and al Mosul and the Sawad. You will be near land, sea and mountain. Then al-Mansur increased his effort and desire in its building. He wrote to the border states to send artisans and workmen, and ordered the selection of men from the upright and the sensible, the learned and the just, and geometricians to supervise the layout of the city and its work. He began it in the year 145. Aba Hanifah, the founder of the law school, used to count mud bricks, and it was he who invented their computation by means of a reed as a ready reckoner. al-Mansur made the width of the wall at its foundations fifty cubits, and at its top twenty cubits. With his own hand he laid the first brick, saying, "In God's name, and His is the praise. The earth is God's, He causes to inherit it whomsoever He wills of His servants, and the issue is to the righteous." 220 Then he said, "Build." He began it in the year 145, and finished it in the year 146. He made it circular, and put his castle in the middle of it, so that none should be nearer to him than another. The expenditure on it reached 4,000,830 dirhams. When it was finished he called the overseers to account for what had been given to them for its building, and held them responsible for balances. He even made one of them refund 25 dirhams for which the audit held him liable. Its names. It is called Baghdad, for there was a place there named Baghdadh, (with dotted dhal). It is also called Baghdan, with a n. It is also called az-Zaura', for its site was formerly called by that name, or, as said, because its prayer niche was out of alignment. The prayer place in its congregational mosque required moving a little to the left side. It is called also the city of al-Mansur. It is also called the abode of peace. It is said that it is a blessed and lucky city. No Caliph has ever died in it. The city of al-Mansur was old Baghdad. This Baghdad on the east bank was newly made later. He it was who behaved as he did to the house of al-Hasan. He took their principal leaders, including 'Abdullah al-

221 Mahdi, son of al-Hasan, son of al-Hasan, son of 'Ali, son  
 (117) of Abu Talib, who was the chief 'Alid of his time, his  
 children and brethren and the children of his brethren, the  
 senior members of the house of al-Hasan, and imprisoned  
 them close to himself, and they died in his prison. It is  
 related that his children went out and said, 'Let any  
 members of the house of al-Hasan who are at the gate  
 enter,' and the principal men of the house of al-Hasan  
 entered. He went out again and said 'the same with the  
 same result.' Then he took them aside into a private  
 place and smiths entered by another door and fettered  
 them. He then took them to Iraq and imprisoned them  
 till they died in prison at Kufah, may God not requite him  
 good for his deed ! One of the strange things which  
 befell about that was that a member of the house of al-Hasan  
 went and stood before al-Mansur who asked, "What has  
 brought you ?" He replied, "I have come that you may  
 imprison me with my kin, for I do not like the world  
 without them." So he imprisoned him with them. That  
 man was 'Ali, son of Hasan, son of al-Hasan, son of 'Ali,  
 son of Abu Talib. He was one of the handsomest of  
 men and was called 'the yellow brocade' because of his  
 beauty and grace. al-Mansur summoned him and said to  
 him, "Are you the yellow brocade ?" He replied, "So  
 they say." The other said, "I will surely kill you in a  
 unique manner." Then he gave orders about him and  
 they built a pillar about him while he was still alive and he  
 died in it. An account of the reason for al-Mansur's  
 222 action against the house of al-Hasan. The house of  
 Hashim, descendants of Talib and those of 'Abbas met  
 together at the end of the Umayyad regime and considered  
 their position, the persecutions they endured, the degree of  
 weakness reached by the Umayyads, the inclination of the  
 people in their favour and their affection for them, because  
 of the propaganda made in their interest, and they agreed  
 that they should summon the people (to their cause)  
 secretly. Then they said, "We must have a head whom  
 we acknowledge," and they agreed to acknowledge 'the  
 pure soul,' Muhammad, son of 'Abdullah, son of al-Hasan,

son of 'Ali, son of Abu Talib. He was one of the chiefs of the house of Hashim, and one of their best men in excellence, nobility and knowledge. This meeting was attended by the chiefs of the house of Hashim, those descended from both 'Ali and 'Abbas. Of the chiefs of the descendants of Talib there attended it Ja'far as-Sadiq, son of Muhammad, and 'Abdullah, son of al-Hasan, son of 'Ali, son of Abu Talib, and his two sons, Muhammad 'the pure soul,' and Ibrahim, the one slain at Bakhmara, together with a company of the descendants of Talib. From the chiefs of the descendants of 'Abbas were as-Saffah and al-Mansur, and others of the house of al-'Abbas. The company agreed to acknowledge 'the pure soul,' except the Imam Ja'far, son of Muhammad as-Sadiq. He said to his son 'Abdullah al-Mahdi, "Your son will not attain it,"—meaning the Caliphate, "None will attain it save the owner of the yellow gown,"—meaning al-Mansur, for on that day al-Mansur had on a yellow gown. al-Mansur said, "At that hour I arranged the offices in my heart." Then they agreed upon acknowledgement of the pure soul, and acknowledged him. Events took their course and the kingdom passed to the house of al-'Abbas, as has already been explained. Then it passed from as-Saffah to al-Mansur, who concentrated on finding the pure soul to kill him or exile him. The fact that the people were strongly inclined to the pure soul prompted him to this, for they credited him with merit, nobility and leadership. So al-Mansur sought him from his father 'Abdullah al-Mahdi, who was one of the foremost chiefs of the house of Hashim. al-Mansur constrained him to produce his two sons, Muhammad the pure soul, and Ibrahim. He answered, "I do not know about them, they have already gone into hiding through fear of you." When the argument with their father 'Abdullah was protracted, he said, "How much will you drag it out? In truth, were they beneath my feet I would not raise those from them. Heavens! Shall I bring you my two boys that you may kill them?" So he imprisoned him and his family of the house of al-Hasan, and there occurred con-

cerning them what has already been explained. An account of the revolt of the pure soul, Muhammad, son of 'Abdullah al-Mahdi, son of al-Hasan son of al-Hasan, son of 'Ali, son of Abu Talib. The pure soul was one of the foremost chiefs of the house of Hashim, in merit, nobility, faith, knowledge, generosity, and excellence. At the start it was bruited amongst the people that he was the Mahdi, of whom the glad tidings had been given. His father

224 confirmed this in the hearts of some groups of the people ; and used to relate that the Prophet said, "If there only remained for the world a single day, God would prolong that day to send in it our Mahdi or our leader. His name will be like my name and the name of his father like the name of my father." The Imamite sect relate this tradition omitting "and the name of his father like the name of my father." 'Abdullah al-Mahdi used to say to the people of his son Muhammad, "This is the Mahdi, of whom good tidings have been given ; this is Muhammad, son of 'Abdullah." Then God inspired the people with love of him, and they inclined towards him altogether. The nobles of the house of Hashim reinforced this by acknowledging him. They prepared him for rule and preferred him above themselves. His desire to attain rule

(119) grew, and grew, too, the desire of the people for him. He continued in hiding while the empire pertained to the house of al 'Abbas, fearing for his personal safety at their hands, but when he knew what had happened to his father and to his people, he appeared in al-Madinah, and his affairs came into the open. The notables of al-Madinah acknowledged him, only a small number abstaining. Then he got control of al-Madinah, and its Amir in al-Mansur's interest withdrew from it. He appointed a governor over it and a judge ; also broke open the doors of the prisons, releasing those in them, and got control over al-Madinah. When Muhammad, son of 'Abdullah revolted and did what he did in al-Madinah, a man named As al-Amiri from al-Madinah went to al-Mansur, in nine days. He reached him at night, and stood at the city's gates, shouting, till they recognised him and admitted him. ar-Rabi'

225 the chamberlain said, "What has made you come at this time, when the Commander of the Faithful is asleep?" He replied, "I must see him." ar-Rabi' went in, told al-Mansur the news, and admitted him to him. Then he said, "Commander of the Faithful, Muhammad, son of 'Abdullah has revolted in al-Madinah and has done such and such." He replied, "Did you see him?" He answered, "Yes, and I saw him (with my own eyes) on the pulpit of the Prophet of God, and I spoke with him." al-Mansur put him into a room, and reports about it came to him in continuous succession. So he brought him out, and said to him, "I will do well by you, reward you, and enrich you. In how many days did you arrive from al-Madinah?" He replied, "In nine nights," and he gave him 9,000 dirhams. al-Mansur was greatly agitated and time passed while they exchanged letters and messengers between them. Each of them sent to the other a witty letter, accounted one of the best letters (known), in which he urged his claims, and in doing so used all kinds of means. In the final stage he called his brother's son 'Isa, son of Musa, to fight against him. He sent 'Isa, son of Musa against him with a numerous army, and they met at a place close to al-Madinah. Victory lay with the troops of al-Mansur, and Muhammad, son of 'Abdullah, was killed. His head was brought to al-Mansur. That was in the year 145. Then his brother, Ibrahim, son of 'Abdullah, revolted, the slain at Bakhmara by al-Basrah. A brief explanation of how that took place. Ibrahim, son of 'Abdullah, used to be in hiding, and he presented himself to the troops of al-Mansur in disguise. Often he  
226 sat at table while al-Mansur was assiduously looking for him. He went out from the city of al-Mansur and passed to al-Basrah. He came out into the open there and proclaimed himself. A party followed him and his troops became numerous. al-Mansur sent against him his brother's son, 'Isa, son of Musa, after the latter's return from killing the pure soul. 'Isa, son of Musa, advanced  
(120) against him with 15,000 regular troops, and they met at a village called Bakhmara, close to al-Kufah. The

victory lay with the troops of al-Mansur, and Ibrahim was killed in the struggle. That was in the year 145. The days of al-Mansur were (full) of disunion and events. Another who revolted against him was his uncle, 'Abdullah son of 'Ali. as-Saffah had sent him to fight Marwan the Ass, as has already been explained. Then as-Saffah died, and al-Mansur succeeded to the Caliphate. 'Abdullah, son of 'Ali, was in Syria and he coveted the Caliphate. He addressed the people, saying, "as-Saffah invited the people to fight against Marwan, and only I answered the call. He said to me, "If you overcome him and obtain the victory, you shall be the heir apparent after me." A company testified to that in his favour and the people acknowledged him. When the news reached al-Mansur it agitated him exceedingly, and Abu Muslim of Khurasan said to him, "If you like I will gird myself and serve you, or, if you will, go to Khurasan and reinforce you with troops. Or, if you like, I will go to war against 'Abdullah, son of 'Ali." He ordered him to go to war against 'Abdullah, son of 'Ali. So Abu Muslim went with a numerous army and the struggle between the two of them prolonged itself for months, at the end of which the victory lay with the troops of Abu Muslim. 'Abdullah, son of 'Ali, fled to al-Basrah, and stayed with his brother, Sulaiman, son of 'Ali, son of 'Abdullah, son of 'Abbas. Sulaiman interceded for him with al-Mansur, and sought a safe conduct for him. al-Mansur gave the safe conduct, and wrote him an eloquent letter, in which he undertook everything. But when he came to him he imprisoned him, and he died in the prison. It is also said that he built him a house, putting salt in the foundations. Then when the rains came, it fell on him and killed him. It was al-Mansur who killed Abu Muslim of Khurasan. An explanation of how that came about. Long past al-Mansur had been in his heart irritated against Abu Muslim. Between them was mutual hatred and al-Mansur had formerly advised his brother, as-Saffah, to kill him. But as-Saffah refrained, and said; "How should that be in view of his excellent efforts on behalf of our dynasty?" When al-Mansur succeeded to the Caliphate,



he sent Abu Muslim to Syria to fight his paternal uncle, 'Abdullah, son of Ali, son of al-'Abbas, as has already been explained. When Abu Muslim had conquered, and had looted all the property of the soldiery of 'Abdullah, son of Ali, and 'Abdullah had fled to al-Basrah, al-Mansur sent one of his servants to take possession of the remainder of  
228 the soldiers' property. Then Abu Muslim became angry, and said, "(Am I) trustworthy in 'life and death' but deceitful over property?" He spoke ill of al-Mansur, and one of the spies wrote reporting that to al-Mansur, that Abu Muslim had dismissed him for contumacy, that  
(121) he was proceeding to Khurasan and would not present himself to al-Mansur. al-Mansur was afraid that Abu Muslim would go to Khurasan in that attitude and cause trouble for him there.

Abu Muslim was an awe inspiring man, politically astute, brave, intelligent, bold in action, sagacious and learned. He had heard Traditions, and was versed in all knowledge. Then al-Mansur wrote to him, pacified him, flattered him, and summoned him to his presence. He replied, "I remain in my allegiance but I am going to Khurasan. If you mend your conduct, I shall remain loyal and faithful, but if you are unwilling to do other than give free rein to your caprice, I shall look to my own interests in such a way as to secure safety." al-Mansur's fear was intensified, he hated him, and wrote him a letter, of which the purpose was, "We do not regard you in the manner which you assume. Your great efforts on behalf of our dynasty should free you from such an idea," and he invited him to his presence. He said to the principal members of the house of Hashim, "Do you write also to him," and they wrote to him blaming him for his contumacy to al-Mansur and for his disagreement, also advising him  
229 to present himself to him, and to make his excuses to him. al-Mansur sent the letter by hand of a sensible friend of his, and told him, "Go to him and speak to him the gentlest speech that you have ever spoken to anyone. If he returns, return with him, till you bring him before me. But if he persists in his disagreement and insists on going so

that you despair of him, and no trick remains to you, then say to him, "So and so says to you, 'I am not (descended) from al-'Abbas, and may I cut off from Muhammad, if any one else than I myself conduct the war against you and,—by every oath,—if I do not conduct it myself, should you continue in this manner and not turn aside'." The messenger went to him, and handed to him the letter, which he read. He then turned to a friend of his, called Malik, son of al-Haitham, and said, "What do you advise?" He replied, "I advise that you do not return to him, for, if you return to him he will kill you, but, if you go on your way till you reach ar-Ray, well, they are your troops, then you can stop and reflect on your position. Then, if anything befall you, Khurasan will be at your back."

Abu Muslim determined to do that, and said to the messenger, "Tell your master that I am not of opinion to present myself before him, but I am proceeding to Khurasan." Then the messenger said to him, "Abu Muslim, you have ever been the one trusted by the family of Muhammad, and I invoke you, in God's name, not to brand yourself with the mark of disobedience and disagreement. The best advice is for you to present yourself to the Commander of the Faithful, and make your excuses to him. You will not see from him anything unpleasant." Abu Muslim replied to him, "Why do you address me like that?" The man answered, "Heavens!

230 You invited us to appoint these people to rule and to help them, and you told us to kill those who opposed them,  
(122) and when we have entered with you into that to which you summoned us, you back out of it and reproach us for it." Abu Muslim replied, "It is as I told you, and I have not backed out." He added to him, "And have you nothing else than this (to say)?" He answered, "Yes," and told him in private what al-Mansur had said. Then he was silent and looked down for a while, and said, "I will return and make my excuses to him," He returned, handed over his troops to one of his friends and said to him, "If my letter comes to you sealed with half of my seal, then it is my letter, but if it is sealed with

the whole seal, then know that it is not my seal." He gave him last instructions as he wished, then went to al-Mansur, meeting him at al-Mada'in. When al-Mansur was informed of his arrival, he ordered all the people to go to meet him. When he had an audience of him, he kissed his hand, made him come near and honoured him. Then he ordered him to return to his tent and rest, to have a bath and to return on the next day. So he went away and when it was dawn the messenger of al-Mansur came to him to summon him. al-Mansur had already prepared a number of his friends behind the curtains, with weapons in their hands, and warned them that, when he clapped one hand on the other, they were to emerge and kill Abu Muslim. When Abu Muslim came before him, he said to him, "Tell me about the two swords which you found in the camp of 'Abdullah, son of 'Ali." Abu Muslim replied, "This is one of them." He had a sword in his hand which al-Mansur took and put beneath his prayer mat. Then he began to censure him and to upbraid him for fault after fault, and Abu Muslim made his excuses for each one. Then he enumerated against him a number of faults, and Abu Muslim replied, "Commander of the Faithful, such as I are not spoken to thus, nor charged with such a number of faults after what I have done." Then al-Mansur became angry, and said, "Son of a foul woman! What have you done! If there had been in your place a black slave girl she would have done what you have done. Did you reach what you have reached save through us and our dynasty?" Abu Muslim replied, "Leave this for I have attained (a state) when I fear only God." Then al-Mansur clapped one hand on another, and that band emerged, and battered him with their swords. He cried out, "Commander of the Faithful, spare me for your enemies," but al-Mansur answered him, "What enemy have I more hostile than you?" Then he gave instructions about him, and he was rolled up in the carpet. 'Isa, son of Musa, came in and said, "Where is Abu Muslim, Commander of the Faithful?" al-Mansur replied, "He

is there in the carpet." He said, "Have you killed him?" "Yes." He answered, "We are God's and to Him do we return,—after his efforts, his deeds and his safe conduct?" al-Mansur had given him a safe conduct, and 'Isa, son of Musa, had gone surety for it. Then al-Mansur said, "God tear out your heart! In truth you had no enemy on the face of the earth more hostile than he. Had you any right of possession in his life?" Then al-Mansur ordered largesse for his troops, and they dispersed. al-Mansur had undisputed control over Khurasan, and that was in the year 137.

232

(123)

Following the killing of Abu Muslim, a man named Sanabadh revolted in Khurasan. A brief account of how that came to pass. This Sanabadh was a Magian, from one of the villages of Nisabur, one of the friends of Abu Muslim and one of his creatures. He showed his anger at the killing of Abu Muslim, his partisans became numerous, and a large number of the hill folk obeyed him. He became master of much of the land of Khurasan. When the news of him reached al-Mansur, he sent against him 10,000 cavalry, and they met between Hamadhan and ar-Ray. This Sanabadh had created extreme disorder in the country which he had conquered, and captured the children. He made it plain that he intended to pass on to the Hijaz, and to demolish the Ka'abah. When he and the soldiers of al-Mansur met, Sanabadh, who had taken with him a number of the Muslim women whom he had captured and who were on camels, ordered these captured women to be brought out in front of his troops. The women came out, unveiled, on the camels and shouted mightily, "O Muhammad!" Then the camels were frightened and wheeled round in retreat against the troops of Sanabadh, and dispersed them. The soldiers of al-Mansur followed them and entered behind the camels, put them to the sword and annihilated them, the number of slain being about 60,000. Study has already pointed to the fact that he who inaugurates a dynasty and creates it will not, in most cases, enjoy it. As the Prophet said, "Desire not power for you will be denied it." It is as

223

though the inaugurator of a dynasty possesses truculence and caprice insupportable by the hearts of kings. And, as his truculence increases, so their inability to support it increases till they attack him. al-Mansur deprived his nephew 'Isa, son of Musa, of his rights as heir apparent, and gave them to his son, Muhammad al-Mahdi. An account of how that came about. He was 'Isa, son of Musa, son of Muhammad, son of 'Ali, son of 'Abdullah, son of al-'Abbas, the Amir of al-Kufah, the nephew of al-Mansur. Ibrahim the Imam had already made 'Isa, son of Musa, the heir apparent, after al-Mansur, and had taken the people's oaths of allegiance to him, and made them swear them to him. But when al-Mahdi, the son of al-Mansur, grew up al-Mansur was exceedingly fond of him, and wanted him to be acknowledged as Caliph. So he deposed 'Isa, son of Musa, and caused witness to be borne to his deposition, and acknowledgement of al-Mahdi to be made. He made 'Isa, son of Musa, successor to him.

- (124) An account of how 'Isa, son of Musa, was deposed. The chief biographers disagree as to the method of his deposition. It is said that al-Mansur asked that of him, that he honoured him, and sate him on his right and al-Mahdi on his left. But when al-Mansur spoke to him about self abdication, he replied, "Commander of the
- 224 Faithful, how shall I do about the oath which (bears) on my neck and the necks of the people, (the penalty of breaking which is) to free slaves, divorce wives, perform the pilgrimage and give alms? I cannot abdicate." Then al-Mansur changed towards him, kept him at a certain distance, began to admit al-Mahdi to audience before him, and to seat him lower than al-Mahdi. He began to seek means of doing him injury. It happened that 'Isa, son of Musa, was sitting and he dug out the wall against which he was leaning, and the earth besprinkled his head. He said to his children, "Be off!", then he got up and prayed with the earth besprinkling him, then he was admitted to audience and went into al-Mansur with the earth upon him, which he had not shaken off.

al-Mansur said, "Isa, no one has ever entered my presence in the way you have entered, (covered) in dust and earth. Is all that from the street?" 'Isa replied, "I think so, Commander of the Faithful," and he did not complain. Others say he gave him something to drink to destroy him, that he was sick for a while then recovered from it, and that this doing of injury was continually repeated against him till he abdicated and took the oath of acknowledgement (to al-Mahdi). Others say no, that al-Mansur egged on the troops, and that they began to abuse 'Isa, son of Musa, when they saw him, and to get at him. When he complained of that to al-Mansur the latter said to him, "My nephew, truly I am afraid of them, both for you and for myself, for love of that lad,—meaning al-Mahdi,—has saturated their hearts, unless I prefer him to you." Then 'Isa abdicated, and took the oath of allegiance to al-Mahdi. When one of the folk of al-Kufah saw him, after al-Mahdi had been preferred to him in the Caliphate and he himself had become successor to him, he said, "This is he who was to-morrow and who has become the day after to-morrow." Others say that al-Mansur bought it from him for money,—a sum of 11,000,000 dirhams. Others say no, that he sent to him Khalid, son of Barmak, and that he took with him a company from the family of al-Mansur, about thirty men. He went to 'Isa and spoke to him of self-abdication, but he refused. When he refused, Khalid said to the company, "We witness against him that he has abdicated, by that we spare shedding his blood, and abate this civil strife." So they bore witness against him to that effect and proof thereof held. 'Isa denied it, but he paid no attention to him, then he deposed him and the oath of allegiance was taken to al-Mahdi. God knows which of these was (so).

(125) It was al-Mansur who built ar-Rasafah for his son al-Mahdi. An explanation of the reason for its being built. The army had already mutinied against al-Mansur, who said, to Lakhtham son of al-'Abbas, son of 'Abdullah, son of al-'Abbas, "Do you not see the plottings of the army? I am afraid that their mutterings may coalesce." The

other answered him, "Commander of the Faithful, the best advice is to transfer your son to the eastern bank, and transfer with him a section of the army. Build for him a city, in which he and an army will be on the eastern bank, while you with an army on the western bank. If any occurrence from one of the two banks frighten you, you can seek aid against it from the other bank." He accepted what he said, and built ar-Rasafah. When ar-Rasafah was completed, the subsequent caliphs used to bury their dead in it. They built notable tombs therein, transported thither valuable carpets and expensive furniture beyond computation. They put in trust for its (upkeep) estates, farms and domains to a great number. In their days it was a sanctuary, if one in fear took refuge therein he was safe. al-Mansur died in a state of Ihram in Mekkah, in the year 158. ar-Rabi' concealed this event for the sake of obtaining the oath of allegiance to al-Mahdi. It is said that he seated him and propped him up, putting a light veil over his face, through which his face was visible, and he did not disclose his real condition. He gave audience to the chiefs of the house of Hashim, who, when they entered, stood before him under the impression that he was alive. Then ar-Rabi' advanced towards him as though he were consulting with him, then he returned to them and said, "The Commander of the Faithful instructs you to renew the oath of allegiance to al-Mahdi." Then all the people took the oath. It is said that when the news of this *lese majeste* by ar-Rabi' reached al-Mahdi, he said, "Did not awe of the Commander of the Faithful prevent you from doing thus to him?" An account of the ministry in his time. In his time the ministry was not of much importance, owing to his taking independent action, his self sufficiency in counsel and competence, added to the fact that he always consulted about affairs. The awe he inspired minimised that felt towards the ministers. They were ever in terror and fear of him, and they lacked prestige and splendour. The ministry of Abu Ayyub al-Muriyani for al-Mansur. Muriyan is one of the villages of al-Ahwaz. al-Mansur had bought

him as a boy before becoming Caliph and had trained him.

287 It chanced that he once sent him to his brother as-Saffah, who was Caliph, and sent a present with him. When as-Saffah saw him, he marvelled at his appearance, intelligence, and beauty, and said to him, "Boy, to whom do you belong?" He replied, "To the brother of the Commander of the Faithful." The other answered, "No, to me," and kept him with himself, writing to al-Mansur to tell him that he had taken him and freed him. He was exclusively in the service of as-Saffah during his Caliphate, then his affairs prospered and God's favour to him increased till al-Mansur appointed him minister. He was intelligent, a sound administrator, clever, sagacious, shrewd, of great merits, generous, abounding in manly qualities. Generosity. It is recorded that the son of Shabramah said, "I married my son with a dowry amounting to 1,000 dirhams, and I began to think who could help me with that. I went to Abu Ayyub al-Muriyani, the minister of al-Mansur, and I mentioned that to him. He said, "We have already ordered that amount for you." I rewarded him with good wishes, and stood up to go away, then he said, "Do not be in a hurry. Sit down," adding, "When you have paid the dowry, what will your son require for expenses?" Then he said, "Give him 2,000 dirhams for expenses." I began to get up, when he said, "Do not be in a hurry, will he not need a servant? Give him 2,000 dirhams for a servant." He continued ordering for me 2,000 dirhams at a time till the amount which he had ordered for me completed 50,000 dirhams. An account of the imprisonment of Abu Ayyub Sulaiman al-Muriyani, the minister of al-Mansur. Abu Ayyub

288 used to love the amassing of wealth, by means thereof to curry favour with al-Mansur when he was in fear of him. One day al-Mansur said to him, "What do you think of the position of my son Salih,—he has no estate." Abu Ayyub replied, "Commander of the Faithful, in al-Ahwaz are destroyed farmlands for (the development of) which 300,000 dirhams are needed." He gave orders for



them to be cultivated for his son, Salih, and Abu Ayyub took the money, but did no work at all on the estate. At the beginning of each year he used to bring 20,000 dirhams, saying these were the revenue from the renovated estate. For a while, the affair was hidden from al-Mansur, then the foes of Abu Ayyub found this to be a means of delation against him, and they informed al-Mansur of the state (of affairs) so he went down thither himself. But Abu Ayyub gave orders to build rooms on the banks of the canal, planted vines in them and made their surroundings green. When he had done that, al-Mansur passed by them, and Abu Ayyub said, "These are the estate." al-Mansur saw the cultivation and the greenness, and was almost deceived in the matter, but the foes of Abu Ayyub informed him of the true state of affairs. He mounted in person, took guides with him, and perambulated the estate, finding it undeveloped, with no cultivation in it. Then he understood the matter, and realised the duplicity of Abu Ayyub, whom he disgraced and killed. He also killed his relations and escheated their wealth. Ibn Habib, the poet of al-Kufah, said on this subject :

(127)  
239

"We have found kings hate him to whom they willingly give the reins of power,  
And whenever they approve his forbidding or commanding, they bring him too their violence and their disapproval,  
After Hafs, Sulaiman drank the cup, and the hand of Fate moved round against him,  
Khalid, son of Barmak, escaped there from, when they invited him after it to be Amir,  
The most wretched of the worlds in their condition are those benamed clerk or minister."

The ministry of ar'Rabi', son of Yunis, for al-Mansur. He was the father of al-Fadl, ar-Rabi', son of Yunus, son of Muhammad, son of Kaisan, who was Abu Farwah, a freedman of 'Uthman, son of 'Affan. It used to be said that ar-Rabi' was a foundling, and on account of that

one day he said to a man who was repeating "God have mercy on him" in respect of his father, in the presence of al-Mansur, "How often will you repeat mention of your father and say 'God have mercy on him?'" The man answered him "You must be excused for this, for you have not tasted the sweetness of having a father." They said that the truth was that he was the son of Yunus, son of Muhammad, son of Abu Farwah, but illegitimate, They said, "Yunus, son of Muhammad, had relations with a slave girl belonging to them and she gave birth to ar-Rabi', but Yunus disowned him, so that he was sold and was banded about in slavery till he came to the house of al-'Abbas." It reached me that 'Ala' ud Din 'Ata Malik, son of al-Jawini, the chief secretary, used to claim descent from al-Fadl, son of Ar-Rabi', and I marvelled at how the Secretary, 'Ala' ud Din,—seeing  
 240 his nobility, merit, and study of biography and history,—liked to claim descent from al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi'. For if he improperly laid claim to this descent, it were patent disgrace, while, if it were the truth, true wisdom would have required the hiding of it. For no more vile, disgraceful nor meaner ancestry could be found. In the first place, because the son of ar-Rabi' was not a free man himself, and accused of vice, —he had a boy who used to come to him and who was known as the stallion of al-Fadl, and the poets wrote verses about it, amongst which were:

"The sodomy of the Caliph is a wonder, and more marvellous than that is the minister's lust,  
 Were the one to be satisfied with the other, they two would have the advantage of concealment."

In the second place, because ar-Rabi', even though he was sufficiently noble, yet was an arriviste, genealogically, for it used to be said that he was a foundling, and sometimes that he was a bastard. The best status he could claim was that of a true connection with Abu Farwah, the freedman of 'Uthman, son of 'Affan, and in that lies sufficient disgrace, for Abu Farwah was a plebeian. He

was a slave of al-Harith, a gravedigger in Mekkah, and  
 (128) al-Harith was a freedman of 'Uthman, son of 'Affan. So  
 Abu Farwah was the slave of a slave of 'Uthman. Con-  
 241 cerning that a poet said :

“ The patronage of Kaisan belongs to al-Harith who  
 undertook long since the digging of graves in  
 Yathrib.”

Abu Farwah rebelled against 'Uthman in the 'battle of the compound,' and that alone is a sufficient disgrace. Consider if you can see a genealogy lower or viler than that, and more marvellous than the opinion of the Secretary, 'Ala' ud Din, and His Excellency's so lacking anyone to inform him of this truth, and to make him realise it. ar-Rabi' was a noble, eminent man, a thorough administrator, awe inspiring, eloquent, competent, resolute, sensible, sagacious, experienced in accounting and public works, skilful in statecraft, prudent in what to do and what to omit, fond of charity. It is related that al-Mansur one day summoned a man of whom it was said that he attacked the governor of one of the Provinces. al-Mansur said to him, “Wretch, you attacked so and so the governor. Truly, I will scatter more of your flesh than shall remain on your bones.” He was a very old man, and he recited in a weak voice :

“ Will you teach your wife after she has grown old ?  
 It is trouble indeed to teach the aged.”

242 al-Mansur said, “ Rabi', what did he say ? ” He replied,  
 “ He said, ‘ The slave is yours and yours is the order,—  
 will your chastisement be turned away from me this day ? ’ ”  
 Then he said, “ We have forgiven you, and let him go.”  
 al-Mansur saw in his garden one day a small tree, of the  
 kind called “ disagreement,” and did not know what it  
 was. He said, “ Rabi', what is this tree ? ” ar-Rabi'  
 replied, “ Unity and accord,” for he did not like to say  
 “ disagreement.” al-Mansur thought him sensible, and  
 approved what he said. ar-Rabi' continued as minister  
 to al-Mansur to the day of the latter's death. ar-Rabi'

took action to secure the oath of allegiance to al-Mahdi, as has already been described. He was the last of the ministers of al-Mansur. al-Hadi killed him, and the reason of his being killed was that he gave a beautiful slave girl to al-Mahdi, son of al-Mansur, and al-Mahdi gave her to his son, Musa al-Hadi, who was overcome with love of her, and made her the mother of his children. When al-Hadi became Caliph, the foes of ar-Rabi' accused him<sup>1</sup> saying to him,<sup>2</sup> "When he looks at your children, he says, 'In truth I never put 'twixt the earth and myself a better (woman) than the mother of these'." Al-Hadi took that much to heart as a criticism also of his children and the slave girl too. So al-Hadi proffered him a cupful (129) of poisoned honey, which he drank, and died on the instant, and that was in the year 170. The period of al-Mansur and his ministers came to an end, then reigned after him his son Muhammad al-Mahdi, who was Abu Abdullah Muhammad al-Mahdi, son of Abu Ja'far al-Mansur, whose genealogy has already been given. The oath of allegiance to him as Caliph was taken in Mekkah, in the (243) year 158. al-Mahdi was vigorous, sagacious, generous, violently hostile to heretics and Manichaeans. No blamer could blame him (for lack of zeal) in destroying them. In respect of faction, battles and revolts his period resembled that of his father. He used to sit for the redress of grievances at any time. It is related of him that when he sat for the (redress of) grievances he said, "Bring in the judges to me." If there were no help for the aggrieved, but (he said this) only out of respect for them that would be enough. It is related of him that he once went out for recreation, with him being one of his intimates, a man named 'Amr. They two became separated in the hunt from the soldiers. al-Mahdi was hungry and said, "Is there anything to eat?" 'Amr replied, "I see a hut," and they made for it. By it was a Nabatean, owner of a kitchen garden, and they greeted him. He returned the greetings and they said, "Is there any food?" He answered, "I have 'relish',"—it was a kind of salted

<sup>1</sup> ar-Rabi'. <sup>2</sup> al-Hadi.

fish,—“and barley bread.” al-Mahdi said, “If you have olive oil, you will have made your hospitality perfect.” He replied, “Yes, and leeks,” and he gave them that. Both ate till they were satisfied, then al-Mahdi said to ‘Amr, “Make a poem about this,” and he replied :

“He who provides food of ‘relish’ with olive oil, and  
barley bread with leeks  
Surely deserves for his foul deed a slap, or two, or  
three.”

244 al-Mahdi said, “What you have said is quite wrong, you should have said :

“Surely deserves for his good deed a purse or two,  
or three.”

He spoke, and the soldiers and treasure chests and servitors came up with them, and he ordered three purses (to be given) to the Nabatean and went away. In his time al-Muqanna’ appeared in Khurasan. An account of how that happened. This al-Muqanna’ was a short one-eyed man, of the people of Marv. He had fashioned a mask of gold and superimposed it on his face, lest his face be seen. He professed immanence of the deity and used (180) to say, “God created Adam and was immanent in his form, then in the form of Noah, and so on and soon to Abu Muslim, the man of Khurasan. He called himself Hashim, and used to profess the transmigration of souls. A number of erring folk paid allegiance to him, and used to pray towards him, wherever they might be in the country, and they used to say in battle, “Help us, Hashim!” A large number gathered to him. al-Mahdi sent an army against him, and he was besieged by them in a fortress there. They beset him for a long time, and he grew tired as did his supporters. Most of them asked for a safe conduct, but a small band remained with him, he being besieged in the fortress. He kindled a great fire and burnt everything that was in the fortress, animals, clothes and utensils. Then he collected his children and women and said to his supporters, “Whosoever of you

245 wishes to ascend with me into Heaven, let him throw himself into this fire." Then he threw himself in, his children and his women, fearing that they would get possession of his corpse or his family. When they were burnt the gates of the fortress were opened, and the troops of al-Mahdi entered, finding it empty and bare. When al-Mahdi succeeded to the Caliphate he renewed the argument about the deposition of 'Isa, son of Musa, and taking the oath of allegiance to his two children,—Musa al-Hadi and Harun ar-Rashid. An account of the manner of his deposition in the time of al-Mansur has preceded, and of how al-Mahdi was preferred to him. When al-Mahdi succeeded, he desired for his children that which al-Mansur had desired for him, and he asked 'Isa, son of Musa, to abdicate himself. But he refused, and he threatened him and cajoled him till he accepted, and bore witness to his own abdication. The oath of allegiance was then taken to his two sons, al-Hadi and ar-Rashid. al-Mahdi used to look into the details of administration in the same way as his father. al-Mahdi when he succeeded ordered the return of the genealogy of the family of Ziyad ibn Abihi to 'Abid ath-Thaqifi, and their cancellation from the register of the Quraysh. Also the return of the genealogy of the family of Abu Bakr to the clientage of the Prophet of God. He wrote a decree to this effect, and what he ordered was carried out. Then, afterwards, the officials took bribes from the house of Ziyad, and replaced them in the register of the Quraysh. al-Mahdi made several expeditions against Byzantium, in which he was victorious. al-Mahdi died in Masbadhan, and there is disagreement as to the cause of his death.

246 Some say that in one of his hunts he flushed a gazelle, and the gazelle went into the door of a ruined building, the horse of al-Mahdi going in after it ; that the door of the ruined building knocked against him and broke his back so that he died immediately. Others say that one of his slave girls put poison in a certain dish for another slave girl, and that al-Mahdi ate from it in ignorance and died. That was in the year 169. Abu 'l'Atahiyah

said, describing his slave girls who came forth after his death, clothed in sackcloth :

“ They went in figured silk, then came in sackcloth,  
To every animal that butts comes a day when it is  
butted,

You are not immortal even though you live as long as  
lived Noah,

If you have no escape from groaning, then groaning  
is your lot.”

An account of the state of the ministry in his time. In his time the pomp of the ministry became apparent, because of the competence of his minister, Abu 'Ubaidullah Mu'awiyah, son of Yasar. He collected the revenues of the kingdom, organised the offices and fixed the principles. He was a unique Secretariat official, and without peer in sagacity, learning and experience. This is a short account of his 'tenure of office,'—the ministry of Abu 'ubaidullah Mu 'awiyah, son of Yasar, for al-Mahdi. He was a client of the 'Asharis, and al-Mahdi's secretary and agent before (his accession to) the Caliphate. al-Mansur entered him<sup>1</sup> into his<sup>2</sup> service. He had already purposed making him minister but he preferred him for (the service of) his son al-Mahdi. He had complete control of the affairs of al-Madhi, who did not gainsay anything he said, and al-Mansur continually gave him<sup>1</sup> instructions about him<sup>2</sup> and ordered him<sup>2</sup> to follow his<sup>1</sup> advice. When al-Mansur died and al-Mahdi sat on the throne of the Caliphate, he entrusted him with the administration of the realm and handed over to him the offices. He was pre-eminent in his calling, and introduced several new precedents. One of these was that he transferred the land-tax to proportionate tribute in kind. The ruler used to take a fixed land tax, from the produce, not proportionately. But when Abu 'Ubaidullah succeeded to the ministry he fixed the matter on a proportion in kind. He also put the tax on date trees and trees, a position which has remained to our present time. He composed

1 Abu 'Abdullah. 2 al-Mahdi.

a book on the land tax ; he mentioned in it the legal enactments about it, its details and principles. He was the first to compose a book on the land tax ; others afterwards, who composed books on the land tax, copying him. He was excessively proud and haughty. It is related that when ar-Rabi' came from Mekkah after the death of al-Mansur and taking the oath of allegiance to al-Mahdi, he presented himself at once on his arrival at the door of Abu 'Ubaidullah. His son, al-Fadhl, said to him, "Father, do we start with him before the Commander of the Faithful, and before we dismount (at our lodging) ?" He replied, "Yes, my son, he is the man's favourite and in control of his affairs." He said, "ar-Rabi' arrived at the gate of Abu 'Ubaidullah, the  
 248 minister, and stood for a while till the chamberlain emerged. Then he<sup>1</sup> entered and asked for an audience of him,<sup>2</sup> and was given one. When he<sup>1</sup> went into him<sup>2</sup> he<sup>2</sup> did  
 (132) not get up to greet him,<sup>1</sup> then he<sup>2</sup> asked him<sup>1</sup> about his<sup>1</sup> journey and condition. ar-Rabi' told him and began to discuss the happenings in Mekkah,—the death of al-Mansur and his efforts in having the oath of allegiance taken to al-Mahdi. But he shut him up and said, "The news has already reached me, and there is no need to repeat it." Then ar-Rabi' was angry, got up, went out, and said to his son al-Fadhl, "May so and so happen to me if I do not expend my wealth and my position in doing him harm and destroying his well being." ar-Rabi' went to al-Mahdi who made him his chamberlain. He became intimate with him as he had been with his father, and he began to harm the position of Abu 'Ubaidullah, the minister, by all possible means, but nothing chanced (to come) to him. Then he was alone with one of his enemies and he said to him, "You have seen what Abu 'Ubaidullah has done with you,"—for he had done him a wrong, "and what he has done with me also. Have you a plan about this matter ?" The man said, "No, in truth I have no strategem whereby you might come at him for he is one of the most moral of men in (matters of) sex, hand

<sup>1</sup> ar-Rabi.    <sup>2</sup> The minister.



and tongue. His way of conduct is an upright way, his sagacity in his profession is unsurpassable, and his sense and competence are as you know. But his son is a loose liver, blameworthy in his life, susceptible to criticism, and if you prepare a strategem by way of the son, perchance that . . . " ar-Rabi' kissed him between his eyes, and the opportunity of a strategem against him occurred to him. He bore tales against his son to al-Mahdi of different kinds. Sometimes he accused him of relations with one of al-Mahdi's women, sometimes he  
 249 accused him of Manichaeism, for al-Mahdi was very violent against heretics and the Manichaeans, ever on the look out for them and destroying them. When the Manichaeism of the minister's son was rooted in the mind of al-Mahdi, he summoned him and asked him about something in the noble Koran. He did not know, so he said to his father who was present, "Did you not tell me that your son had the Koran by heart?" He replied, "Yes, Commander of the Faithful, but he has parted from me for a long time and he has forgotten it." Then he<sup>1</sup> said to him<sup>2</sup> "Rise and make an offering to God of his blood." So Abu 'Ubaidullah rose, stumbled and lay kicking. Then al-'Abbas, son of Muhammad, the paternal uncle of al-Mahdi, said, "Commander of the Faithful, if you see fit to excuse the old man putting his son to death entrust another than him with that," so al-Mahdi ordered one of those present to kill him, and he struck off his head. His father continued as usual in the service, save that he was obviously broken, raging at heart. al-Mahdi too, was enraged at heart against him. One day he came in to al-Mahdi to put before him a letter which had arrived from one of the frontiers, and al-Mahdi ordered the audience hall to be cleared. Everyone who was in it went out except ar-Rabi', and Abu 'Ubaidullah did not bring up anything of that letter, and asked that ar-Rabi' should go out. So al-Mahdi said to him, "Rabi', go out," and ar-Rabi' moved away a little and al-Mahdi said, "Did I not order you to go out?"

<sup>1</sup> al-Mahdi. <sup>2</sup> The minister.

He replied, "Commander of the Faithful, how can I go out while you are alone, with no weapon, and with you is a Syrian whose name is Mu'awiyah, whose son you killed yesterday and whose breast you have enraged. How can I leave you with him in this condition and go out?" This idea struck in the soul of al-Mahdi, but he only said, "Rabi', I trust Abu 'Ubaidullah in every way," and he said to Abu 'Ubaidullah, the minister, "Bring up what you like, there are no secrets from ar-Rabi!" Then afterwards al-Mahdi said to ar-Rabi', "I am ashamed about Abu 'Ubaidullah on account of the killing of his son, and keep him away from me." So he kept him away, and he was secluded in his house, and his affairs went to bits, and ar-Rabi' secured the occasion he desired of destroying his well being. Abu 'Ubaidullah Muawiyah, son of Yasar, died in the year 170. The ministry of Abu 'Abdullah Ya'qub, son of Dawud, for al-Mahdi. He was a freedman, and as-Suliyi said, "Dawud was his father and his brothers were clerks to Nasr, son of Sayyar, the Amir of Kurasan. Ya'qub, son of Dawud, used to favour the Shi'ah. In the first stage of his career he inclined to the clan of Abdullah, son of al-Hasan, son of al-Hasan, and important experiences came to him in (doing) that. Then al-Mahdi feared lest the clan of al-Hasan should start something that he could not counter, so he looked for a man familiar with the clan of al-Hasan to help him in their affairs. ar-Rabi' pointed out to him Ya'qub, son of Dawud, on account of the friendship existing between ar-Rabi' and him, and in order that they two might concert the destruction of the power of Abu 'Ubaidullah Mu'awiyah, the minister. So al-Mahdi caused him to be brought into his presence, spoke with him and thought him the most sensible of men, and the most excellent of them in behaviour. He was much attracted by him and made him a personal friend, then appointed him minister, and entrusted affairs to him. It is said that the reason of his appointment to office was other than this. That it was Ya'qub, son of Dawud, promised ar-Rabi' 100,000 dinars if the ministry were obtained for him. So ar-Rabi' began

to praise him in private interviews with al-Mahdi till al-Mahdi wanted to see him. When he came before him he thought him the best of men in character and excellence, then he said to him, "Commander of the Faithful, here are matters which have not come to your notice, but if you appoint me I will bring them before you, and expend my energy in giving you good advice." He made him come close and near and he began to give him affairs and important matters and sound advice such as he had never been given before. He made an intimate of him and wrote a document to the effect that he was his brother in (the sight of) God. Then he made him minister, and entrusted all affairs to him, and handed over to him the bureaux, preferring him before all the people, till Bashar said, lampooning him :

"Sons of Umayyah, arise ! Your sleep has been long.

In truth the Caliph is Ya'qub, son of Dawud

Your Caliph is missing, O people, so look for the  
Caliph of God 'twixt the strings and the flute."

- 134) That was because al-Mahdi was much occupied with sport, play and listening to songs. He entrusted affairs to  
252 Ya'qub, son of Dawud. The friends of al-Mahdi used to drink palm wine at his house, and it is said that he used not to drink with them. Ya'qub, son of Dawud, stopped him doing that and gave him good advice, saying "Following prayers in the mosque will you do that ? So do not encourage it." On this a poet said to al-Mahdi:

"Put Ya'qub, son of Dawud, to one side from you, and bring forth the tawny, sweet smelling (wine)."

Informers continued informing against Ya'qub, son of Dawud, till he disgraced him and put him in al-Mutbaq (prison),—it was the prison for perpetual incarceration,<sup>1</sup>—where he remained for all the days of al-Mahdi, and for part of those of al-Hadi, till Rashid had him released. An account of the reason for his imprisonment and of how that came about. It is related that Ya'qub, son of

<sup>1</sup> Reading "alkhalid."

Dawud, said, "al-Mahdi summoned me one day and I went in to him. He was in an 'arbour'<sup>1</sup> and the tops of the trees lowered down on to the ground of that 'arbour' and they were covered with flowers of various kinds. The 'arbour' had been spread with rose coloured carpets, and before him was a slave girl more beautiful than I had ever seen. He said to me, "Ya'qub, what do you think of the 'arbour'?" I replied, "Extremely beautiful, God has favoured the Commander of the Faithful." He said, "It is yours, all that is in it, 100,000 dirhams, and this slave girl to complete your joy." I invoked blessings on him. He said, "I have need of your assistance, and  
 253 I want you to promise to fulfil it." I said, "Commander of the Faithful, I am your obedient slave in anything you order me to do." Then he handed over to me a man, an 'Alid, and said, "I want you to see to his business for me, for I fear that he may revolt against me." He went on, I replied, "Willingly." Then he said, "Swear (it) to me." Then I swore to him, "By God, I will do what you wish." Then all the contents of the 'arbour' were transferred to my house, together with the slave girl. Owing to my extreme pleasure in the slave girl I used to put her in a place near my audience chamber, with only a thin curtain between myself and her. He went on, "I had the 'Alid brought in to me and I perceived him to be the most perfect of men in understanding. He said to me, 'Ya'qub, will you meet God with my blood (on your hands), when I am the son of 'Ali, the son of Abu Talib, and the son of Fatimah, and when I have done you no wrong?'" He went on, "I said, "No, indeed; take this money and remove yourself." He added, "The slave girl heard all that, and sent a secret agent to al-Mahdi to inform him of the affair. Then al-Mahdi sent and picketed the roads with men till the 'Alid was apprehended. He put him in a room near his audience  
 (135) chamber, then summoned me, and I came." Then he said, "Ya'qub, what did you do with the 'Alid?" I answered, "God has rid you of him, Commander of the Faithful."

<sup>1</sup> Lit., any sitting place.

He said, "Is he dead?" I replied, "Yes." He said, "By God?" I answered, "Yes, by God." He replied, "Put your hand on my head and swear by it." Ya'qub  
 254 went on, "So I put my hand on his head and swore by it." Then he said to one of his servants, "Bring out to us him who is in that room." He went on, and the 'Alid was brought out. When I saw him, speech was denied me, and I was at a loss what to do. Then al-Mahdi said, "Ya'qub, I can lawfully now kill you. Take him to the Matbaq."<sup>1</sup> Ya'qub went on, "Then I was let down by a rope into a dark well, I saw no light in it. There was brought to me daily enough to live on, and I remained for a space of time, I do not know how much it was. I lost my sight. Then on a certain day a rope was let down to me, and someone said "Ascend. Release has come." So I ascended, my hair and nails were long. Then I was put into the bath and they made me presentable, dressed me, and then led me to the audience chamber. Some one said to me, "Greet the Amir of the Believers." I replied, "Peace be on you, Amir of the Believers." Then some one said, "Which Amir of the Believers have you greeted?" I replied, "The Amir of the Believers, al-Mahdi." Then I heard some one saying from the 'throne'<sup>2</sup> "God have mercy on al-Mahdi." Then some one said to me, "Greet the Amir of the Believers," and I saluted 'as before,' and some one said to me, "Which Amir of the Believers have you saluted," and I replied, "The Amir of the Believers, al-Hadi." Then I heard some one saying from the 'throne,' "God have mercy on al-Hadi." Then some one said to me "Greet" and I greeted. Then it was said to me, "Whom have you greeted?" I replied, "The Amir of the Believers, Harun ar-Rashid," and he replied, "Peace be on you, Ya'qub, and the mercy and blessings of God; I am much  
 255 grieved at what has befallen you." Then I absolved al-Mahdi, invoked blessings on ar-Rashid, and thanked him for my deliverance. Then he said, "What do you

<sup>1</sup> A prison, see above.

<sup>2</sup> Lit., "the chief part of the audience chamber."

want, Ya'qub?" I replied, "Amir of the Believers; no means of enjoyment nor sufficiency are left to me, and I desire to live close to Makkah." Then he ordered me (to be given) what would restore me. Then Ya'qub went to Makkah and lived there. His days were not many ere he died there in the year 186. The ministry of al-Faidh, son of Abu Salih for al-Mahdi. He was of the folk of Nisabur, and they were Christians, but they changed over to the house of al-'Abbas and became Moslems. al-Faidh was bred in the 'Abbasid regime, was a man of letters and accomplished. He was generous (186) to a degree, spendthrift of his wealth, bountiful, noble souled, ambitious, so irascible and proud that a poet said of him :

" Abu Ja'far we have come to ask you for a gift, and we lack even a smile (of welcome) let alone a gift,

The rain cloud from which a drop of the spate of your bounty was hoped for has not 'fulfilled your promise,'

Even were you to give us bounty and increase, pride and haughtiness would make it irksome from you."

They said, it was Yahya, son of Khalid son of Barmak, who, when his generosity and bounty ennobled one, said, "If you had seen al-Faidh, mine would be a trifle in your eyes," and of al-Faidh Abu al-Aswad al-Hamani the poet used to say, praising him :

" A censorious woman censured you, Faidh, for generosity, I said to her, 'Censure cannot strike a spark from the sea,

'Do you wish to turn al-Faidh from habits of generosity? Who is he who will turn the cloud away from raindrops?'

The places where the bounty of al-Faidh falls in every land are as the places whereon fall the water of the rain cloud in a parched land.

When the 'clients' of al-Faidh transport themselves to al-Faidh it is as though they came to him on the night of destiny."

They say, al-Faidh, the son of Abu Salih, once was proceeding on some purpose of his own, when he met a friend of his, and al-Faidh asked him, "Whither are you going?" He replied, "To the agent of the lady mother of Ja'far, Zubaidah, who has imprisoned So and So on account of the (unpaid) remainder of a surety, to the amount of 100,000 dinars, and So and So,"—i.e., the imprisoned man,— "is my friend and your friend, too. I am proceeding to the agent mentioned above to intercede for him. Would you like to accompany me and help me in this act of charity?" al-Faidh replied, "Indeed, yes," then went with him and came to the agent of the mother of Ja'far, Zubaidah. They two interceded for the imprisoned man, but the agent said, "In this case the order must be given by herself, I have not authority to release him except on her instruction, but I will speak to her and recommend that he be released." Then he wrote something to her, and the reply came back that he must exact full payment of that sum from him, and left no opening for admission of (their) intercession in this matter. The agent excused himself to the two of them and showed them the handwriting. Then the man said to al-Faidh, "Rise, let us go for we have done our duty." But al-Faidh said, "No, indeed, we have not done our duty, it is as though we came here only to confirm the imprisonment of our friend." The man replied, "What shall we do, then?" al-Faidh answered, "Since it has proved impossible for us to release him in this manner, we must pay this money for him from our private accounts, and get him out,—you half  
257 of it, and I half of it." The man agreed to that, and they two said to the agent, "How much does he owe you?" He replied, "100,000 dinars." They said, "We will pay it, and here is our hand thereto, so hand over to us our friend." He answered, "This, too, I cannot do without informing her about it." They said, "Then tell her." The agent wrote to her, informing her of what al-Faidh said and of how matters stood. Then the servant emerged and said, "al-Faidh is not more generous than we. We have given him the 100,000 (dinars), so  
(187)

hand over to them their friend." They took him and went out. al-Faidh had been described to al-Mahdi when the latter had intentions against Ya'qub, son of Dawud, and, when he imprisoned him, he summoned al-Faidh and made him minister. al-Faidh continued to the first days of ar-Rashid, then died, and that was in the year 173. The days of al-Mahdi and his ministers finished, then, after him, reigned his son Musa al-Hadi. The oath of allegiance to him as Caliph was taken in the year 169. al-Hadi was wide awake, jealous, generous, energetic, forceful, extremely violent, bold hearted, master of his feelings, a thruster, determined and resolute. 'Abdullah, son of Malik, who was in charge of al-Mahdi's police, said, "al-Mahdi ordered me to beat al-Hadi's boon companions and his minstrels and imprison them, so as to keep him from their bad influences. I did what al-Mahdi ordered me about it. al-Hadi used to send to me to treat them gently, but I did not do so. Then, when al-Mahdi died and al-Hadi succeeded, I felt certain of destruction. Then he summoned me one day and I went to him. He was sitting on a throne, with the executioner's sword and mat before him. I greeted him, and he replied, "No greeting to you. Do you remember the day I sent to you about the matter of al-Harani and his beating, and you did not accept my representations?" I said, "Yes, but do you permit me to mention the reason?" He replied, "Yes." I said, "I conjure you by God, had you put me in the office in which al-Mahdi put me, and had you given me the orders al-Mahdi gave me, and one of your children sent to me to contravene your orders, and I followed his representations, and abandoned your instructions, would that please you?" He said, "No." I said, "That is how I stand to you, and how I stood to your father." Then he made me approach, and I kissed his hand. He ordered a robe of honour for me and said, "I appoint you in the office to which you were appointed, go in peace." So I went away with misgivings in regard to my position with him. I said, "He is young and he drinks. Those men over whom



I disobeyed him are his boon companions, his ministers (138) and his clerks, and it is as though 'I am with them. When drink overcomes him, they will overcome his good sense, and cause him to approve of my destruction.' He continued, "I was sitting and my small daughter was with me, a brazier in front of me, with scones and vinegar sauce before me. I was sandwiching them with the sauce, toasting them on the fire, eating them and feeding the little one." Suddenly (were heard) the hoof-beats of cavalry, and I thought the earth was quaking and said, "This is that of which I have been afraid." The door had opened and the servants had entered, with al-Hadi in their midst, on his mount. When I saw him I sprang up, and kissed his hand, his foot and his horse's hoof. He said to me, "'Abdullah, I have pondered your affair, and I said, 'Perhaps it has occurred to you already that when I am drunk with your enemies around me they will dissipate my good opinion of you, and that has caused you alarm. So I have come to your home to put you at ease and to assure you that no rancour against you remains in me. All of it has gone. So come and give me something to eat of that which you are eating, so that 'the bond of food is between us,' and let that dissipate your alarm'." So I gave him some of those scones and vinegar (260) sauce, and he ate. Then he said, "Bring what we brought with us for 'Abdullah." Then there entered four hundred mules loaded with dirhams and other things. He said, "These are yours, use<sup>1</sup> them for your purposes as you will, and keep these mules with you, perhaps I shall have need of them for one of my journeys." Then he went away. One of his (notable) remarks was made to Ibrahim, son of Muslim, son of Qutaibah, whose son had died. al-Hadi came to him to condole with him, for he stood high in his favour. He said to him, "Ibrahim, when your son delighted you he was your enemy and temptation. (Now) he has caused you grief he is (as) prayer and God's mercy." Ibrahim replied, "Commander of the Faithful,

<sup>1</sup> Reading ista'in for MSS istagh'in. Latter would require preposition 'an to follow whereas text has bi.

every part in which was grief has now been filled with consolation." In his time revolted the man of Fkhkha, who was al-Husain, son of 'Ali, son of al-Hasan, son of al-Hasan, son of 'Ali, son of abu Talib. An account of the events of the battle of Fakhkh. al-Husain, son of 'Ali, was one of the principal, and most excellent men of the house of Hashim. He had determined on revolt and a number of the chiefs of his house agreed with him. Then the governor of al-Madinah chanced to harm an 'Alid, and the house of Abu Talib sought revenge therefor. A numerous company gathered to them, they made for the headquarters of government, besieged the governor, broke open the prisons and brought out those in them. The oath of allegiance was taken to al-Husain, son of (139) 'Ali, then their affairs prospered, so that he sent against them Muhammad, son of Sulaiman,—they said also that Sulaiman was the son of al-Mansur,—with an army. 261 They met at a place called Fakhkh, between Makkah and al-Madinah, and fought a severe battle. al-Husain, son of 'Ali, was killed and his head was taken to Musa al-Hadi. When the head was placed before him he said to the man who had brought it, "Just as though you had brought the head of some outlaw! The least I can mete out to you is to deprive you of reward," and he granted them nothing. al-Husain, son of 'Ali, was the man of Fakhkh, was brave and generous. He came to al-Mahdi who gave him 40,000 dinars, and he divided them amongst the people of Baghdad and al-Kufah, and did not keep anything with which to clothe himself except a 'winter coat' with no shirt beneath!

al-Hadi's reign was not long; it is said that his mother, al-Khaizaran, ordered her slave girls to kill him, so they sat on his face till he died. As to the reason for that there has been disagreement. Some say that al-Khaizaran had a free hand in al-Mahdi's reign, issuing instructions both positive and negative, 'pardons,' ratifying and abrogating, and that the cortéges (of officials) went morning and evening to her door. When al-Hadi succeeded, who was of a jealous disposition, he disliked that, and said to

her, "What are these cortéges which I hear come to your door at morning and evening? Have you no spindle to occupy you? Nor sacred volume on which to ponder? Nor house to seclude you? In truth, may I be excluded from relationship to the Prophet, if I do not behead any one of my generals or intimates of whom I hear that he waited at your door, and sequester his wealth." Then he said to his friends, "Which is the better, I and my mother, or you and your mothers?" They replied, "Of course you and your mother." He replied, "Which of you likes men to bandy talk about his mother, and to say, 'The mother of so and so has done . . .'" They replied, "We do not like that." He went on, "Then why do you go to my mother and talk with one another about her conversation?" When they heard that, they kept away from her. Then he sent her poisoned food, but she did not eat it, and, later, killed him. It is also said that the reason was that al-Hadi purposed excluding his brother Harun ar-Rashid from the succession, and having the oath of allegiance taken to his son Ja'far. al-Khaizaran feared for Harun, whom she loved, so acted to al-Hadi as she did. al-Hadi died in the year 170. The night he died was the night in which a caliph died, a caliph ascended the throne, and a caliph was born. They used to relate that there would be a night like that. The caliph who died was al-Hadi; the one who ascended the caliph's throne was ar-Rashid, and the one who was born was al-Ma'mun.

(140) An account of the state of the ministry in his time. When he was acknowledged as Caliph, he made ar-Rabi', son of Yunus, minister, of whose biography and genealogy a short account has preceded. After him he made Ibrahim, son of Dakwan of Harran, minister. The ministry of Ibrahim, son of Dakwan of Harran for al-Hadi. Ibrahim had been connected with al-Hadi in the days of his youth. He used to come to him with the teacher who taught al-Hadi. Ibrahim was beloved by al-Hadi and became so intimate with him that in the end he could not bear to be parted from him. Later, malicious tales

were told of him to al-Mahdi, who disapproved of his friendship with his son and ordered him to keep away. But he did not refrain and he threatened him with death. al-Hadi would not keep him at a distance, and the tales against him to al-Mahdi increased ; so he sent to his son al-Hadi, saying, " Send to me Ibrahim of Harran. If not, I will depose you from succession to the Caliphate." So he sent him to him accompanied by some of his servants, and in style. He reached him as al-Mahdi was about to mount for the hunt. When he saw him, he said, " Ibrahim, I will surely kill you," adding, " Guard him till I return from the hunt." He<sup>1</sup> fell to prayer and supplication, and it chanced that al-Mahdi had eaten poisoned food,—as has been previously recounted,—and died immediately. The man of Harran was saved, and al-Hadi sat on the Caliph's throne. Then a short while after that, he made the man of Harran minister, but it was not long ere al-Hadi died. The period of al-Hadi and his ministers ended ; After him ruled his brother, Harun ar-Rashid. The Caliphate of Harun ar-Rashid, to whom the oath of allegiance was taken in the year 170. ar-Rashid was one of the most outstanding, eloquent, learned and generous of Caliphs. Throughout his Caliphate, one year he made the pilgrimage, the next he made a military expedition, save for a few years only. They say he performed the act of prayer a hundred times daily ; that he made the pilgrimage walking on foot, and that no Caliph made the pilgrimage walking on foot save he. When he made the pilgrimage, a hundred canon lawyers and their children made the pilgrimage with him, and when he did not make the pilgrimage, he paid for the pilgrimage of three hundred in lavish style and sumptuous attire. He resembled al-Mansur in his actions, save in (his) extravagance, for no caliph was ever seen more open-handed than he. The doer of good never lacked good treatment from him, nor was he put off. He used to love poetry and the poets, and inclined towards men of letters and the canon law. He disliked theological disputes, but loved praise, especially

<sup>1</sup> Ibrahim

from an eloquent poet, to whom he would give generously. (141) al-Asma'i said, "ar-Rashid prepared a banquet, adorned his audience chamber and summoned Abu al-'Atahiyah, to whom he said, 'Describe to us our enjoyment of this world below,'" and Abu al-'Atahiyah said :—

"Live as you like in safety in the shade of lofty castles."  
ar-Rashid said, "You have done well, then what?"

285 He continued :

"Haste is made to you with whatsoever you desire, at evening or at morn."

He said, "Good and then what?" He went on,

"But when the breaths rattle in the darkness of the chest,  
Then you will surely know that you have only been  
deluded."

ar-Rashid wept, and al-Fadhl, son of Yahya, said, "The Commander of the Faithful sent to you to cheer him up, but you have made him sad." ar-Rashid said, "Leave him alone for he saw us in (a state of) blindness, and disliked to make us more so." ar-Rashid used to behave in a humble manner to men of learning. Abu Mu'awiyah, the blind, who was one of the most learned, said, "I ate with ar-Rashid one day, and a man poured water on my hands, saying to me, 'Abu Mu'awiyah, do you know who poured water on your hands?'" I said, "No, Commander of the Faithful." He replied, "I." I said, "Commander of the Faithful, did you do this to honour learning?" He answered, "Yes." In his reign, Yahya, son of 'Abdullah, son of Hasan, son of Hasan, revolted. An account of how the revolt of 'Abdullah, son of Hasan, son of Hasan, son of 'Ali, son of Abu Talib, came about. Yahya, son of 'Abdullah, had already taken fright on account of what had happened to his two brothers, the pure soul and Ibrahim, the slain of Bakhmara. So he went into the Dailam country, where they believed in the truth of the Imamite doctrine. They took the oath of allegiance to him, and people from the provincial capitals

gathered to him. His power became great, and ar-Rashid was disquieted on account of that, and sent against him  
 286 al-Fadhl, son of Yahya, with 50,000 men, making him governor of Jarjan, Tarbaristan, Ray and other places. Yahya proceeded with the troops, but treated Yahya, son of 'Abdullah, kindly, warning him, frightening him, and playing on his desires, so that Yahya inclined to make a truce, and asked for a safe conduct, in the handwriting of ar-Rashid, also that the judges, canon lawyers and the notables of the house of Hashim should witness it. ar-Rashid agreed to that, and was pleased thereat. He wrote for him an eloquent safe conduct in his own handwriting, and the judges, canon lawyers and senior members  
 (142) of the house of Hashim witnessed it. He sent the safe conduct with gifts and presents, and Yahya arrived with al-Fadhl. Initially, ar-Rashid met him with everything he wanted, then imprisoned him in his own house, and asked the canon lawyers to give a ruling abrogating the safe conduct. Some of them ruled that it was valid, with these he argued. Others ruled it might be revoked, so he revoked it. Then he killed him after the manifestation in his favour of a noteworthy miracle. An account of the miracle which was manifested in the case of Yahya, son of 'Abdullah. A man of the family of Zubair, son of 'Awam, came before ar-Rashid and informed against Yahya, whom, he said, after the safe conduct, had acted and done (this and that), and had invited the people to follow him. ar-Rashid brought him before him from his prison, arranged a meeting between him and the Zubairite, and asked him about that. He denied it but the Zubairite persevered. Then Yahya said to him, "If you are telling the truth, take an oath." The Zubairite replied, "By God, the Seeker, the Conqueror . . ." and wished to complete the oath. But Yahya said to him, "Leave that oath, for God Most High is slow to punish him who  
 247 praises Him. But swear to Him the oath of independence," for that is a mighty oath, of the form that one should say of himself that he is independent of the might and power of God, and relies on his own power and might, if such

and such is so. When the Zubairite heard this oath he trembled at it, and said, "What is this strange oath?" and declined to swear it. But ar-Rashid said to him, "What idea prevents you; if you are telling the truth in what you say, what makes you afraid of this truth?" So he swore by it, and he had not gone out from the audience chamber, ere he stumbled and died. Others say that the day was not done ere he died. Then they bore him to the grave, put him therein and wanted to cover over the grave with earth. But, whenever they put earth in it, it disappeared and the grave was not filled. So they knew that it was a sign from Heaven, and roofed in the grave and went away. Abu Faris, son of Hamadan refers to that in his poem 'rhyming' in M, when he says:

"Thou who strivest to hide their ill deeds, how can  
be hidden ar-Rashid's deceit of Yahya?"

The Zubairite tasted the consequences of perjury,  
and stories and suspicion were cleared away from  
the son of Fatimah."

Despite the manifestation of this mighty miracle, Yahya was put to death in his prison in a horrid way. The reign of ar-Rashid was one of the best of reigns, most replete of them in dignity, splendour and charity, and the one which most increased the extent of the realm. ar-Rashid received taxes from the greater part of the world, and the ruler of Egypt was one of his governors. There never  
268 collected at the Caliph's door so many scholars, poets, canon lawyers, Koran readers, judges, clerks, boon companions and bards as collected at the door of ar-Rashid; each one of them used to meet with most generous treatment, and he raised him to the highest rank. He was  
(143) outstanding, a poet, an authority on history, records and poems, of nice taste and discrimination, respected by both (his) intimates and the common folk. He seized 'Ali Musa, son of Ja'far, and had him brought to him at Baghdad in a tent. He imprisoned him in the compound of ar-Sindi, son of Shahak, then he killed him and gave out that he died a natural death. An account of how that came about. One of those relatives of Musa, son of

Ja'far, who was jealous of him, had already informed against him to ar-Rashid, saying, "People are bringing one-fifth of their wealth to Musa, and believe that he is the Imam. Also he intends to revolt against you." He said much, which ar-Rashid thought of the greatest importance, and was frightened at it. He then gave the informer money which he secured on the (revenues of a) district, but he did not enjoy it. The money had not reached him from the district ere he sickened violently and died in it. As for ar-Rashid, he made the pilgrimage in that year, and when he came to al-Madinah, he seized Musa, son of Ja'far, brought him in a tent to Baghdad, and imprisoned him in the house of as-Sindi son of Shahak. ar-Rashid was at ar-Raqqah, and gave orders for him to be killed; so he was killed secretly, then a company of the assessors of al-Karkh were brought in to see him, to give out that he had died a natural death. ar-Rashid died at Tus. He had gone out to Khurasan to war with Rafi', son of al-Laith, son of Nasr, son of Sayyar. This Rafi' had already rebelled and refused obedience. He had obtained control over Samarkand, killed its governor and ruled over it. His power grew strong, and ar-Rashid went out in person against him, then died at Tus in the year 193. An account of the position of the ministry in his reign. When the oath of allegiance was taken to him as Caliph, he made Yahya, son of Khalid, son of Barmak, who had been his Secretary before he became Caliph, his minister. From that time the power of the house of Barmak became evident. An explanation of the circumstances of the Barmakid regime, and an account of its beginning and its end. Formerly they were of the Magian faith, then those of them who became Muslim became Muslims, and their conversion to Islam was sincere. We have already made mention of the ministry of their grandfather, Khalid Barmak, in the reign of al-Mansur, and we make mention here of the ministries of the rest. But before going into detail about that here are a few words from which you may briefly understand the circumstances of the (Barmakid) regime.



(144) Know that this regime was the blaze on the forehead of its time, the crown on the parting of the age. Proverbs were made from their generosity. , Caravans set off towards them and hopes depended on them. The world gave them generously of 'its utmost,'<sup>1</sup> and granted them  
 270 its good fortune to the full. Yahya and his sons were as shining stars, brimming seas, floods in spate or clouds full of rain. With them the wares of letters had a ready sale, and the rank of those who deserved respect with them was high. The world in their time was populous, and the prestige of the realm evident. They were the refuge of the heart-broken, and the resource of the exiled. Of them said Abu Nuwas :

“Greetings to the world when you have not been missing,  
 sons of Barmak, from those who fare forth at  
 morn or evening.”

When ar-Rashid ascended the Caliph's throne, he appointed Yayha, son of Khalid, son of Barmak, as minister. He had been his secretary, deputy and minister before he became Caliph. Yahya, son of Khalid, addressed himself to the tasks of the empire, with consummate address. He put the frontier defences in order, repaired defects, taxed the resources, colonised the furthest provinces, and made apparent the glory of the Caliphate. He had discretion in important affairs of state, and he was an accomplished secretary, clever, well read, upright, straight thinking, a sound administrator, a good organiser of that in his control, forceful in affairs, charitable,—rivalling the wind in generosity and charity,—praised by every tongue, forbearing, chaste, grave, respected, of him someone said:

“ You will not see my hand clasping the hand of Yahya,  
 for if I do, I shall lose my wealth,  
 If a miser touches the palm of Yahya, his soul burns  
 to squander his gains.”

271 One of the sound opinions of Yahya was that which he voiced to al-Hadi, who had determined to oust his brother

<sup>1</sup> Lit., 'the lobes of its livers.'

Harun from succession to the Caliphate, and to have the oath of allegiance taken to his son Ja'far, the son of al-Hadi, when Yahya was secretary to ar-Rashid. He wanted Harun to succeed to the Caliphate, so that he might become minister of the realm. al-Hadi took Yahya on one side and gave him 20,000 dinars, speaking to him of the deposition from the succession of his brother Harun, and of having the oath of allegiance taken to his son, Ja'far. Then Yahya said to him, "Commander of the Faithful, if you do (this) you will drive the people to break oaths, and to dishonour contracts, and the people (themselves) will be emboldened to do the same. But if you leave your brother Harun as heir apparent, then cause the oath of allegiance to be taken to Ja'far in succession to him, that would 'strengthen his position' in the matter of having allegiance paid to him". al-Hadi left (the affair) for a while, then love of his son mastered him, and he summoned Yahya a second time, and spoke to him about that. Then Yahya said to him, "Commander of the Faithful, if death comes upon you, after you have deposed your brother from the succession and had the oath of allegiance taken to your son Ja'far, who is young and a minor, do you think his Caliphate will be secure? Or that the senior members of the house of Hashim will be content with that, and hand the Caliphate over to him?" He replied, "No." Yahya went on, "Then leave it till it comes to you in the natural course of events, for, if al-Mahdi did not cause the oath of allegiance to be taken to Harun, it is surely your duty to do so for him, so that the Caliphate may not depart from your father's children." al-Hadi approved his view, and ar-Rashid thereafter used to consider this the greatest benefit Yahya, son of Khalid, had done him.

272 Concerning his generous deeds, it is said that ar-Rashid, when he overthrew the Barmakids and extirpated them, prevented poets from eulogising them and ordered that to be punished. One of the guards passed by a ruined building, and saw a man standing with a paper in his hand on which was poetry, containing an eulogy of the

Barmakids, which he was reciting, weeping the while. The guard seized him and brought him to ar-Rashid, telling him of what had happened. ar-Rashid summoned him and asked him about it. He confessed to it, and ar-Rashid said to him, "Did you not hear that I have forbidden eulogies of them? I will surely do this and that to you." He replied, "Commander of the Faithful, if you permit me to tell the story of my position, I will tell it. Thereafter do what you will." He said, "Speak on." (The man) continued, "I was one of the most junior clerks of Yahya, son of Khalid, and one of the poorest. One day he said to me, 'I want you to-day to entertain me in your house.' I replied, 'Sir, I am too insignificant, nor is my home made ready for this.' He answered, 'You must.' I said, 'If I must, give me a respite to put my affairs and my house in order, thereafter do what you think right.' He said, 'For how long shall I respite you?' I said, 'A year.' He answered, 'Too much.' I said, 'Then some months.' He replied, 'Yes.' I went away and began to put my house in order and to prepare the wherewithal for the invitation. When I had 'done so' I informed the minister thereof, and he said "We will be your guests to-morrow." So I went away to prepare the food, the drink, and what was needed for it. On the morrow the minister came,  
273 accompanied by his two sons, Ja'far and al-Fadl, with a small number of his intimate followers. He alighted from his mount, and his two sons, Ja'far and al-Fadl, alighted, too. He said, "So and So, I am hungry, so bring me something quickly," and al-Fadl his son said to me, "The minister likes roast chicken. Bring quickly any that is ready." I entered and brought some of that, and the minister and those with him ate. Then he rose, walked into the house, and said, "So and So," show us all your home." I replied, "Sir, this is my house, I have  
4146 nothing more." He answered, "Nay, you have more." I said, "In truth, I own only it." He said, "Bring a builder," and when he had come he said to him, "Make a door in this wall," and he went to open it. I said, "Sir

how is it lawful to open a door into neighbours' houses when God has enjoined safeguarding the neighbour?" He replied, "There is no harm in that," and the door was opened. The minister and his sons rose and passed through it, I with them. They emerged into a beautiful garden, having many trees with water flowing freely in it. In it, too, were pavilions and arbours to delight any observer, together with furniture, carpets, servants and slave girls of surpassing beauty. He said, "This home and all in it is yours." I kissed his hand, and invoked blessings on him and the truth of the story came out, that, on the day he spoke to me concerning the invitation, he had sent to buy the properties adjoining me, and built in them a beautiful home, transferring thither everything (necessary) though I did not know notwithstanding the fact that I had seen the building which I attributed to one of the neighbours. Then he said to his son, Ja'far, "My son, here is the home and the family, but where is the wherewithal for them?" Ja'far replied, "I have given him such and such an estate with what is on it, and I will inscribe a deed for him to that effect." Then he turned to his son al-Fadl and said to him, "From now till the revenues of this estate come in on what will he live?" al-Fadl answered, "I will give 10,000 dinars which I have brought to him," and he said, "Give him quickly what the two of you have said." So Ja'far inscribed for me the deed of the estate, and al-Fadl brought me the money. Then I grew rich, my circumstances improved, and with this I thereafter acquired considerable wealth, which I have been turning over till to-day, and, in truth, Commander of the Faithful, I shall not find an opportunity of praising them and invoking blessings on them without making use of it. As for repaying their kindness, I cannot repay it. So, if you kill me for that, do as seems good to you." ar-Rashid reflected on that. He let him go and allowed all the people to eulogise them. It is said that ar-Rashid went on the pilgrimage, with him being Yahya, son of Khalid, son of Barmak, and the latter's two sons, al-Fadl and Ja'far. When they reached the town of the Prophet,

ar-Rashid took his seat, Yahya being with him, and they two gave largesse to the people. al-Ma'mun took his seat, Ja'far being with him, and they two gave largesse to the people. In that year they gave three largesses from the amount of which proverbs were coined. They  
 276 used to call it "the year of the three largesses," and the people grew rich on account of it. On that the poet says:

"Those on whom hopes are fixed came to us from the house of Barmak ; How excellent the news and how good the sight !

One year they make a journey against the enemy, the next one to the ancient curtained house.

(147) When they alight in the vale of Makkah it grows with light with Yahya, al-Fadl and Ja'far.

But it darkens in Baghdad while the black night is dissipated for us in Makkah when the three moons make the pilgrimage,<sup>1</sup>

Their palms were only made for (distributing) charity, and their feet for (ascending) the planks of the pulpit,

When Yahya wants something, its difficulties become small, and there is no need for you to charge yourself with it nor to plan."

Yahya used to say, "No one has ever addressed me but that I respected him ere he spoke, and when he has spoken, it rested between two things. Either my respect for him was increased or dissipated." He used to say that promises were the nets of the generous with which they hunt the praises of free men. When Yahya rode he used to have prepared purses, in each of which were 200 dirhams. These he distributed to those who met him. The biography of young al-Fadl, son of Yahya. al-Fadl was one of the world's most generous men, and the most charitable of the people of his age. The mother of Harun ar-Rashid had suckled him, whilst his mother suckled ar-Rashid. Merwan, son of Abu Hafsah, said on that :

<sup>1</sup> Reading, with Amar, hajju.

276 "It is sufficient source of pride for you that the noblest  
free woman gave you suck with one breast and  
the Caliph with the other,  
You have made Yahya splendid in all the sanctuaries,  
just as Yahya has made Khalid splendid in the  
sanctuaries."

ar-Rashid put him in charge of Khurasan, and Abu 'l Hul  
went out to (meet) him, eulogising him to excuse himself  
for verses in which he had lampooned him. He recited  
to him :

"Came to him from the wrath of al-Fadl encountering  
him, a vast cloud in which were lightnings and  
thunder,

How shall he sleep of nights who spreads his couch  
on the path traversed by the tawny lion ?

What wrong have I done to al-Fadl, son of Yahya,  
son of Khalid, that I should fear such hate ?

Just grant me favour,—I need naught else from you,—  
thereafter deal with me as you will."

al-Fadl said to him, "I cannot bear your distinction  
between my favour and my beneficence. They are twin  
fellows. If you want them both together . . . , otherwise  
leave them alone both together." Then he made him a  
present with which he was satisfied.

Ishaq, son of Ibrahim of Mosul, related as follows :  
I had trained a beautiful slave girl, instructed her and  
taught her, till she excelled. Then I made a present of  
her to al-Fadl, son of Yahya. He said to me, "Ishaq,  
the messenger of the governor of Egypt has come to ask  
me what I want.<sup>1</sup> I will demand her of him. So leave  
(148) the slave girl in your house, and I will ask for her, and tell  
277 him that I want her. But, when he comes to you to  
bargain with you for her, do not take for her less than  
50,000 dinars." Ishaq continued, "So I went away to  
my home with the slave girl, and the messenger of the  
governor of Egypt came to me to ask me about the slave

<sup>1</sup> Or, possibly, something he wanted.

girl. I brought her out to him and he made a generous offer for her of 10,000 dinars, but I refused. He went up to 20,000 dinars, but I refused. He then went up to 30,000 dinars, and I could not contain myself, but said to him, "I sell (her) to you," and I handed over the slave girl to him, and received the money from him. I went on the morrow to al-Fadl, son of Yahya, who said to me, "Ishaq, for how much did you sell the slave girl?" I replied, "For 30,000 dinars." He answered, "Did I not tell you not to take less than 50,000 dinars?" I said, "May my father and mother be your ransom, indeed I could not contain myself when I heard the phrase 30,000." Then he smiled and said, "The messenger of the Emperor of Byzantium also has asked me what I want, and I will demand of him this slave girl, and show him the way to you. So take the slave girl, go away to your home, and when he bargains with you for her, do not take less than 50,000 dinars." So I took the girl and went away to my home. The messenger of the Emperor of Byzantium came to me and bargained with me for the slave girl. I asked for 50,000, but he said, "This is too much, but take from me 30,000." Indeed, I could not contain  
278 myself when I heard the phrase 30,000, but said to him, "I sell (her) to you." Then I received the money from him and handed over the slave girl to him. On the morrow I went to al-Fadl, son of Yahya, who said, "What have you done, and for how much did you sell the slave girl, Ishaq?" I replied, "For 30,000." He answered "Good Heavens ! did I not warn you not to take less for her than 50,000?" I replied, "May I be your ransom indeed, when I heard him say 30,000, all my joints loosened !" Then he laughed and said, "Take your slave girl and go to your home, for to-morrow the messenger of the governor of Khurasan will come to me. So be firm, and do not accept from him less than 50,000." Ishaq continued, "So I took the slave girl, and went away to my home. Then the messenger of the governor of Khurasan came to me and bargained with me for her. I asked for 50,000 then he said to me, "This is too much, but take 30,000."

I was firm and refused; so he went up to 40,000 dinars, and my reason almost departed through joy, and I could not refrain from saying to him, "I sell (her) to you." Then he brought the money and I received it, and handed over the slave girl to him. On the morrow I went to al-Fadl, and he said to me, "Ishaq, for how much did you sell the slave girl?" I replied, "For 40,000, and indeed when I heard him say that, my reason almost departed. I have collected, may I be your ransom, 100,000 (149) dinars, and I have no wish left (unfulfilled). May God 279 give you a good reward." Then he ordered the slave girl to be brought out to me, and said, "Ishaq, take your slave girl and go away." Ishaq continued, "And I said, "This slave girl in truth is the luckiest of mankind," so I freed her and married her, and she bore me my children." It is said that Muhammad, son of Ibrahim the Imam, son of Muhammad, son of 'Ali, son of 'Abdullah, son of al 'Abbas, came one day to al-Fadl, son of Yahya, bringing with him a casket containing a jewel, and said to him, "My income has fallen short of my needs, and my debts,—amounting to 1,000,000 dirhams,—are above my means. I am ashamed to tell anyone of that, and I am too proud to ask any of the traders to give that to me as a loan. But I have a pledge to the full value, whilst you,—may God prolong your life,—have traders who know you. So I ask you to get a loan from one of them for me for this amount, and give him this in pawn." Then al-Fadl said to him, "Most willingly, but your staying with me for to-day will facilitate (meeting) this need (of yours)." So he stayed with him. Then al-Fadl took the casket from him, which was sealed with his seal, and despatched with it 1,000,000 dirhams, sending both the dirhams and the casket straight to his home. He took a receipt for it in writing from his major-domo, Muhammad stayed in the house of al-Fadl till the close of the day, then went away to his own house, where he found the casket together with the 1,000,000 dirhams, with which he was exceedingly pleased. On the morrow he went early in the morning to al-Fadl to thank him for that, but found that he had



280 paid a morning call at ar-Rashid's palace. So Muhammad went on to ar-Rashid's palace. When al-Fadl knew that, he went out by another door, proceeding to his father's house. Muhammad pursued him thither, and when he<sup>1</sup> realised he went out by another door, and passed on to his own home, whither Muhammad followed him, met him and thanked him for what he had done, saying to him, "I came early in the morning to thank you for your kindness." al-Fadl said to him, "I have thought about your affairs and it seems to me that the million which I conveyed to your house yesterday will pay your debt, but then you will be in need again and contract (further) debts, which after a little will be as much above your means as before. So I went early to-day to the Commander of the Faithful, stated your case to him, and obtained for you a further million. When you came to the Commander of the Faithful, I went out by another door, and so did I when you came to my father's door, because I preferred not meet to you till the money had been taken to your home. Now it has been taken." Muhammad said to him, "How can I reward you for this kindness? I have nothing to reward you with. Only I bind myself by the most binding oath,—that of divorcing wives, freeing slaves and making the pilgrimage,—that I will never stand at the door of any man save you, nor will I make a request of any man save you." They say that Muhammad swore the most binding oath, and ratified it in his own handwriting, causing it to be witnessed, that he would never stand at the door of any man save al-Fadl, son of Yahya. When the power of the Barmakids (150) collapsed, and al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi', succeeded to the 281 ministry after them, Muhammad was in want, and they asked him if he had visited al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi'. But he did not do so and kept his oath, never visiting anyone nor standing at any one's door, till he died. The biography of Ja'far, son of Yahya the Barmakid. Ja'far, son of Yahya, was eloquent, intelligent, shrewd, clever, generous and forbearing. ar-Rashid was more intimate

<sup>1</sup> al-Fadl.

with him than he was intimate with his brother al-Fadl, on account of the easiness of the characteristics of Ja'far and the roughness of those of al-Fadl. One day ar-Rashid said to Yahya, "My father, why is it that the people call al-Fadl the junior minister, and they do not call Ja'far that?" Yahya replied, "Because al-Fadhl deputises for me." He<sup>1</sup> said, "Then give Ja'far work to do like al-Fadl's." Yahya answered. "Attendance on you and being your boon companion occupy him too much for that." But ar-Rashid ordered him, so he was named the junior minister also. One day ar-Rashid said to Yahya, "I have long wanted to transfer the chancery office from al-Fadl to Ja'far, but I am ashamed to write to him to this effect. Do you write to him." So Yahya wrote to al-Fadl, "The Commander of the Faithful,—may God exalt his rule,—has ordered that the chancery be transferred from your right hand to your left." al-Fadl replied to him, "I have obeyed the order of the Commander of the Faithful in respect of my brother. Pleasure that goes to him is not transferred away from me, nor is an office taken up by him lost to me." Then Ja'far said, "What a brother! How clever his mind! How clear the evidences of merit on him! How strong his intellect! How extensive his powers of eloquence!" It is said that Ja'far, son of Yahya the Barmakid, sat down one day to drink. He wanted to be alone in private and summoned his boon companions with whom he was accustomed to drink. He sat together with them after preparing for the session, and they put on dyed clothes. When they sat to a session for drink and sport they used to put on red, yellow and green clothes. Then Ja'far, son of Yahya, ordered his chamberlain not to admit anyone of God's creatures save one of his boon companions who was late and whose name was 'Abdu 'lMalik, son of Salih. Then they sat down to drink, the cups circulated, and the instruments of music throbbed. One of the relations of the Caliph was called 'Abdu'l Malik, son of Salih, son of 'Ali, son of 'Abdullah, son of al-'Abbas, who was extremely staid, religious, and

<sup>1</sup> ar-Rashid.

reserved. ar-Rashid had asked him to be a boon companion to himself and to drink with him, and, to that end, had lavished large sums on him, but he had not done so.

- (151) It chanced that this 'Abdu'l Malik, son of Salih, came to the door of Ja'far, son of Yahya, to speak with him about some needs of his, and the chamberlain thought that he
- 288 was the 'Abdu'l Malik, son of Salih, for whose admission Ja'far, son of Yahya, had given him orders, also that he should not allow anyone else to enter. So the chamberlain admitted him, and 'Abdu'l Malik, son of Salih the 'Abbasid, came in to Ja'far, son of Yahya. When Ja'far saw him, he almost swooned from shame, and he realised that the issue had been confused to the chamberlain owing to the similarity of the name. 'Abdu'l Malik, son of Salih, too, realised what had happened, and the embarrassment in the face of Ja'far, son of Yahya, was evident to him. So 'Abdu'l Malik smiled and said, "No harm at all,—give me some of these dyed clothes." A dyed shirt was brought to him, which he put on and sat down laughing and joking with Ja'far, son of Yahya. He said, "Give me some of your drink to drink," so they gave him a measure to drink, and he said, "Give me another, for I am not accustomed to this." Then he laughed and joked with them, and did not stop till Yahya, son of Ja'far, smiled, and his frown and embarrassment disappeared. Ja'far was extremely pleased at that, and said, "What was your need (that you came about)?" He replied, "I came with three needs,—may God preserve you,—on which I want you to address the Caliph. The first of them is that I have a debt outstanding against me to the amount of a million dirhams, which I want to pay. The second of them is that I want a governorship for my son to ennoble his rank thereby. The third of them is that I want to marry my son to a daughter of the Caliph, for she is his cousin, and he is her peer." Ja'far, son of
- 284 Yahya, said to him, "God has accomplished these three needs. As for the money, it will be immediately taken to your house; as for the governorship, I appoint your son governor of Egypt; as for the marriage, I marry him to

So and So, daughter of our master the Commander of the Faithful, with a dowry of such and such a sum. So depart in God's safe keeping." Then 'Abdu'l Malik went away to his home, where he saw that the money had preceded him. On the morrow Ja'far came to ar-Rashid and informed him of what had happened, and that he had made him governor of Egypt and had married him to his daughter. ar-Rashid marvelled at that, ratified the marriage bond and the governorship. Ja'far had not left the palace of ar-Rashid before the letter of appointment for Egypt had been inscribed for him, and the judges and witnesses summoned and the marriage knot tied.

It is said that there was enmity and estrangement between Ja'far, son of Yahya, and the governor of Egypt, each of them avoiding the other. A man forged a letter purporting to be from Ja'far, son of Yahya, to the governor of Egypt, the content of which was, "The bearer of this letter is one of our most intimate friends, who desires to amuse himself in the regions of Egypt, so I want you to treat him well . . . " and it commended (him) in  
 285  
 (152) strong terms. Then he took the letter, went to Egypt and presented it to its governor. When he understood it, he was pleased with it and delighted at it, save that he entertained suspicion and doubt about the letter. So he treated the man generously, lodged him in a good house, and provided him with all his needs, taking the letter from him which he sent to his agent in Baghdad, saying to him, "One of the minister's friends has arrived with this letter, which I suspect. I want you to ascertain for me the real facts about it. Is this the handwriting of the minister or not?" He sent the minister's letter together with his own letter to his agent. The agent went to the minister,<sup>1</sup> told him the story, showed him the letter. The minister's major-domo received it, took it into the minister and informed him of the state (of affairs). When Ja'far, son of Yahya, had read the letter he realised that it had been forged 'in his name.' With him were a number of his boon companions and deputies. He threw the letter to

<sup>1</sup> i.e., to his house, *see below*.

them and said to them, "Is this my handwriting?" They considered it and all of them denied that it was, saying, "This is a forgery in the minister's name." Then he informed them of the facts of the case, and that the forger of this letter was to be found in Egypt at its Governor's, who was awaiting return of a reply as to the authenticity of his<sup>1</sup> case. He<sup>2</sup> said to them, "What do you think and how should we act in this matter?" Then one of them said, "We ought to kill this man to prevent a recurrence of this, and in order that no other man may dare to act in like fashion." Another said, "The right hand with which he forged this writing should be cut off." Yet another said, "He should suffer a flogging and be let go." The most moderate of them in counsel was he who said, "His punishment for this deed should be deprivation of any benefit by it, and that the governor of Egypt should be informed of its (true) circumstances so as to deprive him. Then his sufficient punishment would be to return disappointed after the long journey from Baghdad to Egypt." When they had finished speaking, Ja'far said, "Good heavens! Is there no straight thinking man amongst you? You know the enmity and estrangement which have existed between the governor of Egypt and myself. Also that the pride of each of us has prevented him from opening the door to putting (it) right. Now God has led to us a man who has opened a door between us for putting (this) right and corresponding with one another, and to dissipate that enmity between us. So how should his reward be the ill treatment you mention?" Then he took a pen and wrote on the back of the letter "To the Governor of Egypt. Good heavens! Why has doubt as to my handwriting assailed you? This is my own handwriting, and the man is my dearest friend. I want you to treat him well and to return him to me speedily, for I love him well, and have need of his presence." When the letter, with the minister's writing on its back, reached the Governor of Egypt, he almost flew with joy, and treated the man

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the forger's.    <sup>2</sup> The minister.

exceedingly well, and bestowed great riches and valuable presents on him. Then when the man returned to Baghdad, he was, in most comfortable circumstances, and presented himself at the audience chamber of Ja'far, son of Yahya. When he entered, he greeted him and fell, kissing the ground and weeping. Ja'far said to him, (158) "Who are you, my brother?" He replied, "Sir, I am your slave and creature, the rash forger of the letter." Then Ja'far recognised him, was kind to him, made him sit in front of him, and asked him about his affairs, saying to him, "How much did you get out of him?" He answered, "100,000 dinars." Ja'far thought it little and said, "We must double it for you." He<sup>1</sup> kept him<sup>2</sup> for a while and he<sup>2</sup> gained from him<sup>1</sup> as much again. The power of the Barmakids continued to extend, grow and increase, till worldly success lapsed from them.

A sign pointed to the collapse of their power. Buktishu' told a story saying, "One day I went in to ar-Rashid when he was sitting in the castle al-Khald in the city of peace.<sup>3</sup> The Barmakids were living opposite to him on the other bank, with the width of the river between him and them." He continued, "ar-Rashid looked out and saw the throng of horsemen and crowd of people at the gate of Yahya, son of Khalid, and said, "May God reward Yahya well, he occupies himself with the affairs of state and frees me from the trouble, while my time is passed in pleasure." Then I went in to him again after a while, and he had already begun to change his feelings towards them. He looked out and saw the horsemen as he saw them the other time, and said, "Yahya has complete control of the affairs of state without me, and the Caliphate, in reality, belongs to him. I have only its title." He added, "Then I knew that he would overthrow them, and he did overthrow them after that."

An explanation of the reason for the overthrow of the (288) Barmakids and how that came about. The biographers and historians disagree as to the reason for that. Some say that ar-Rashid could not do without (the company of)

<sup>1</sup> Minister. <sup>2</sup> Forger. <sup>3</sup> Baghdad.

his sister 'Abbasah nor without (that of) Ja'far, son of Yahya, so he said to him: "Marry her so that you may lawfully see her, but do not go close to her;" That they two were sitting together both being young, and that ar-Rashid got up and left them by themselves; that Ja'far then had connection with her and she conceived by him and bore two sons; that that matter was concealed till ar-Rashid was informed and that that was the reason for the overthrow of the Barmakids. Some say that the reason for that was that ar-Rashid entrusted Ja'far, son of Yahya, with the execution of a man of the family of Abu Talib; that Ja'far abstained from (doing) that and freed the Talibi; that information against Yahya was laid with ar-Rashid, who said to him, "What about the Talibi?" He replied, "He is in the prison." ar-Rashid said, "Alive?" That Ja'far realised<sup>1</sup> and said "No, by your life, but I released him because I know that no harm would come from him"; That ar-Rashid said to him, "What you have done is all right," but when Ja'far got up (to go), ar-Rashid said, "God kill me if I do not kill you." Then he overthrew them. It is also said that the enemies of the Barmakids, such as al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi', did not cease carrying information against them to ar-Rashid, reminding him of their absolute authority in the realm and of their appropriating the taxes till they irritated him and he fell on them. Others say that Ja'far and al-Fadl, the two sons of Yahya, displayed insolence insupportable by the minds of kings, so that he overthrew them on that account. It is also said that Yahya, son of Khalid, was seen when he was in Makkah perambulating the House, saying, "O God, if it please you to strip your favours from me and to strip from me my family, wealth and children, then strip them from me except my son al-Fadl." Then he turned back and when he had walked a little returned, saying, "Lord, it is wrong that such as I should make an exception in respect of You. O God, al-Fadl too!" Then after a short while ar-Rashid overthrew them. An account of the execution of Ja'far, son of

<sup>1</sup> His danger.

Yahya, and the imprisonment of his family. ar-Rashid had made the pilgrimage, and when he returned from the pilgrimage, he went from al-Hirah to al-Anbar by boat, and began now to drink, now to play. The presents and gifts of ar-Rashid came to him and with him was Bukhtishu' the physician, while Abu Zakar the blind sang to him. When evening came ar-Rashid called Mansur the eunuch, who was hostile to Ja'far and said, "Go and bring me the head of Ja'far, and do not answer me back." So Mansur went to him without getting permission to enter, breaking in on him as Abu Zakar was singing to him:

"So go not far away, for to every lad death comes at evening or at morning."

When Masrur entered, Ja'far, son of Yahya, said to him, "You have delighted me by your coming, but displeased me by your entry without seeking permission. He<sup>1</sup> answered, "The thing for which I have come is most important. Obey the wishes of the Commander of the Faithful concerning you." He<sup>2</sup> fell on his feet and kissed them, and said to him,<sup>1</sup> "Go back to the Commander of the Faithful, for it is drink that has driven him to (do) this," he<sup>2</sup> added, "Let me go to my house and make my will." He<sup>1</sup> replied, "You may not go in, but as for the will, make your will as you like." So he made his will, then he<sup>1</sup> brought him<sup>2</sup> to the lodging place of ar-Rashid, took him into a tent, and struck off his head. He took his head on a shield to ar-Rashid, with his body in the executioner's leather mat. ar-Rashid sent to take his father, brethren, family and friends, imprisoned them at ar-Raqqah, and extirpated them. One of the strange things which befell in that matter was that recorded by al-'Amrani the historian, who said, "So and so related as follows: "I went into the offices and looked at one of the notebooks of the agents in which I saw 400,000 dinars,—the price of a robe of honour for Ja'far, son of Yahya the minister. Then I went in a few days later and saw beneath that (entry) half a dinar<sup>3</sup> the price of naphtha and faggots

<sup>1</sup> Masrur. <sup>2</sup> Ja'far.

<sup>3</sup> Lit., 'ten qarats.' 20 qarats = 1 dinar.



for burning the corpse of Ja'far, son of Yahya, and I marvelled thereat." After the Barmakids, ar-Rashid appointed as minister al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi', who was his chamberlain. The ministry of Abu al-'Abbas, al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi'. Mention of his father has already been made. al-Fadl was chamberlain to al-Mansur, al-Mahdi, al-Hadi, and ar-Rashid. When ar-Rashid overthrew the Barmakids he made him minister after them. al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi', was energetic and experienced in matters  
 201 pertaining to 'courts' and their 'ceremonial.' When he took office as minister, he became interested in letters, collected scholars round himself, and acquired from them what he wanted in a short space of time. Abu Nuwas was one of the poets exclusively devoted to him, and from his poems on the house of ar-Rabi' (is this):

"Abbas is a lion when flares the fire of war, al-Fadhl is excellence (itself), and ar-Rabi' the (very) spring."

al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi', continued as minister till the death of ar-Rashid at Tus. Then al-Fadl collected the troops and what was with them and returned to Baghdad. The rest of his biography will be included in the reign of al-Amin. The reign of ar-Rashid is finished. After him reigned his son al-Amin, Muhammad, son of Zubaidah. His mother was the mother of Ja'far, Zubaidah, daughter of Ja'far, son of al-Mansur. None of the Caliphs of the house of al-'Abbas save he had two of the family of Hashim as his mother and his father. al-Amin was much occupied with sport and play, exclusively devoted to that and because of them too preoccupied to administer his realm. Ibn al-Athir al-Jazari the historian said, "We have found nothing in the biography of al-Amin which we think worthy of mention." Some else said, "al-Amin was ready, eloquent and generous." Of him one of the poets said, in praise, lampooning his brother al-Mamun:

"No slave girl that knew the bargaining in the market bore him,

Nay, nor was he near legal punishment, deceit nor disgrace."

292  
(166)

He alluded to al-Mamun, whom ar-Rashid had punished because he found him with a slave girl, or in wine. ar-Rashid had had al-Amin acknowledged as the heir apparent, also al-Mamun as his successor. He wrote a document to that effect, had it witnessed, sent copies of it to the Provincial Capitals, and a copy of these copies was hung up in the Ka'bah. He ratified that by every means in his power, but when he died at Tus, al-Mamun was in Khurasan. With him were a number of the senior generals, and his minister al-Fadl, son of Sahl. al-Amin was in Baghdad, while al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi', the minister of ar-Rashid was with ar-Rashid in Tus. When ar-Rashid died, al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi', collected the army which ar-Rashid had already bequeathed to al-Mamun, and proceeded to Baghdad. al-Amin then appointed him minister, and occupied himself with sport, play, and the society of wantons. al-Fadl, son of Sahl, the minister of al-Mamun, advised al-Mamun to display piety, religion and correct behaviour. al-Mamun displayed correct behaviour and gathered together the senior officers and the folk of Khurasan. Whenever al-Amin made a weak move,<sup>1</sup> al-Mamun made a strong move, then enmity grew up between them. al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi', and others instigated him<sup>2</sup> to depose his brother al-Mamun from the position of heir apparent, and to have the oath of allegiance taken to his son Musa. So he<sup>2</sup> deposed him<sup>3</sup> and had the oath of allegiance taken to his son Musa, naming him "The speaker of truth." That was the cause of the civil war in Baghdad between al-Amin and al-Mamun, finally leading to the death of al-Amin.

293

An account of the civil war between al-Amin and al-Mamun. al-Fadhl, son of ar-Rabi', the minister of al-Amin, had long been afraid of al-Mamun, on account of his action on the death of ar-Rashid at Tus, when he took his army to al-Amin, though ar-Rashid had already left it to al-Mamun. So al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi', feared that, if he became Caliph, al-Mamun would requite him for his act. So he instigated al-Amin to depose al-Mamun

<sup>1</sup> Metaphor from chess. <sup>2</sup> al-Amin. <sup>3</sup> al-Mamun.

and to have the oath of allegiance taken to his son Musa. A number (of people) agreed with al-Fadl about that, and al-Amin inclined to what they said. Then he consulted the most sensible of his friends who forbade him to do it and warned him of the punishment of injustice, and of breaking oaths and agreements. They said to him, "Do not encourage the senior officers to break oaths and to depose, for they will depose you." But he paid no attention to them, and leant to the view of al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi'. He began to plot against al-Mamun by summoning him to Baghdad. But al-Mamun was not deceived, and wrote excusing himself. Messages and letters passed to and fro between them, till al-Mamun (157) weakened and decided to agree to abdicate, and to take the oath of allegiance to Musa, son of al-Amin. His minister al-Fadl, son of Sahl, had private audience of him, and emboldened him to refuse, promising him the Caliphate. He said, "I undertake (to do) it." So (204) al-Mamun refused, and al-Fadl, son of Sahl, worked in the interest of al-Mamun, winning over the people to him, and organising his frontiers and affairs. The enmity between the two brothers, al-Amin and al-Mamun, grew intense, and means of communication between them from Baghdad to Khurasan were cut. The letters were published, and the position grew difficult. al-Amin deleted mention of al-Mamun in the Baghdad Friday sermon, and seized his agents. al-Mamun did likewise in Khurasan. Bad blood increased between them, but, in proportion to the alertness and efficiency of al-Mamun, al-Amin became negligent, remiss and careless. From the stories told of al-Amin's remissness and ignorance (is this),—that he had sent to fight against his brother one of his father's friends, called 'Ali, son of 'Isa, son of Mahan, sending with him 50,000 (men). It was said that never before had so numerous an army been seen in Baghdad. With it he sent great store of arms and much treasure. He went out with it in person to escort it and say farewell, and it was the first expedition he sent against his brother. 'Ali, son of 'Isa, son of Mahan, went with

that numerous army. He was one of the elders of the empire, noble and respected. Then he met Tahir, son of al-Husain, outside ar-Rayy, and the armies of Tahir just reached 4,000 horse. They fought a severe engagement in which victory lay with Tahir. 'Ali, son of 'Isa, was killed and his head brought to Tahir. Tahir wrote a letter to al-Mamun, of which the transcription (ran):

- 295 "Next, and this is my letter to the Commander of the Faithful,—may God prolong his life,—the head of 'Ali, son of 'Isa, is before me, his signet ring is on my hand and his army in my power. Farewell." He despatched the letter by the post and it reached al-Mamun in three days. Between the two of them was a distance of 250 farasakhs. Then the news of the death of 'Ali, son of 'Isa, was brought to al-Amin who was fishing, and he said to the man who informed him of that, "Leave me for Kauthar has caught two fish, and I so far have caught nothing." Kauthar was a favourite eunuch of his. His mother Zubaidah held sounder views than he, for, when al-Amin sent 'Ali, son of 'Isa, to Khurasan with the army, he presented himself at Zubaidah's door to bid her goodbye, and she said to him, "'Ali, the Commander of the Faithful is my son,—the exclusive object of my affection,—but for 'Abdullah,"—meaning al-Mamun,—"I have much sympathy, on account of the dislike and wrongs which have befallen him. My son, the king, has disputed with his brother over his sovereignty, so recognise 'Abdullah's rights as a son and as a brother; do not affront him in speech
- (158) for you are not his peer; nor treat him roughly as you would treat a slave; nor demean him by fetters or chains; nor refuse him a slave girl or a servant; nor be over-weening to him on the journey, nor treat him badly when travelling; nor mount before him, but hold his stirrup when he mounts, and, if he speaks ill of you, be patient
- 296 with him." Then she handed him a silver chain, saying, "When he leans to you bind him with this chain." He replied, "I will do what you order." The people were confident of 'Ali, the son of 'Isa's victory, thinking much both of him and his army, and little of his opponents

in the army of al-Mamun. But God decreed the opposite of that of which they felt so confident, and events fell out as they did. That period was a period of civil strife and wars. One of the things of that kind which happened was that al-Husain, son of 'Ali, son of 'Isa, son of Mahan, who was one of the generals, revolted against al-Amin, whom he deposed and imprisoned, taking the oath of allegiance to al-Mamun. Some of the soldiers followed him, but others of the soldiers collected together and said, "If al-Husain, son of 'Ali, son of 'Isa, wants to gain favour with al-Mamun by what he has done, then we will gain our Caliph's favour by releasing him, delivering him and reseating him on the throne. The two factions fought, and the partisans of al-Amin won, broke into his prison, brought him out, and resealed him on the Caliph's throne. They fought with Husain, overcame him and brought him as a prisoner to al-Amin, who rebuked him, but he<sup>2</sup> excused himself and he<sup>1</sup> pardoned him,<sup>2</sup> then gave him a robe of honour, put him in charge of the troops, and told him to attack al-Mamun. He went out and fled, so al-Amin sent an army after him which caught him, killed him and brought his head to al-Amin. Difficulties continued to grow and disagreement to increase till al-Mamun sent Harthamah and Tahir, son of al-Husain, —they two being amongst his principal generals,—with a numerous army to besiege Baghdad, and to attack al-Amin. They two besieged Baghdad for a while, and fought hard with their army, many engagements taking place between the two sides, but, in the end, the victory lay with the troops of al-Mamun, al-Amin was killed and his head taken to his brother al-Mamun in Khurasan. That was in the year 198. As for the state of the ministry in his time, he only appointed as minister al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi', his father's minister, a short account of whose biography has already preceded when mention was made of his holding this office under ar-Rashid. al-Amin's reign finished, then, after him, ruled his brother, 'Abdullah al-Mamun. The general oath of allegiance to

<sup>1</sup> al-Amin. <sup>2</sup> Husain.

(159) him was taken in Baghdad, in the year 198. al-Mamun was one of the most eminent, the most learned, the wisest, and the most forbearing of their Caliphs. He was intelligent, forceful and generous. It is related of him that, when he was in Damascus, he was in great straits, with little means, so that he complained of this to his brother, al-Mu'tasim, who held some Provinces. al-Mu'tasim said to him, "Commander of the Faithful, it is as though you had the money, and it will surely reach you after a week." At that period there arrived from the Provinces of which al-Mu'tasim was in charge thirty thousand million dirhams ('nine noughts'). He then said to Yahya, son of Aktham, "Come out with us to look at this treasure." So he went out and the people went out, too. The caravan had been beautified and adorned, so that al-Mamun was most agreeably surprised at the spectacle, and the people thought it magnificent and congratulated him. Then al-Mamun said "For us to go to our homes with this treasure and the people to go away disappointed would be a shame," so he ordered his secretary to write a draft for a million for this man, the like again for that man, and more than that for another man till he had distributed twenty-four thousand million dirhams ('nine noughts'), with his foot still in the stirrup. Then he allocated the remainder to the quartermaster general for the purposes of the army. Know that al-Mamun was one of the greatest of the Caliphs, and one of the most sensible of men. He inaugurated many things in his kingdom, one of which was that he was the first of them to investigate the sciences of the wise, and to study its literature. He ordered its translation into Arabic, and published it. He mastered Euclid, and studied the lore of the ancients. He disputed on medicine and favoured wise men. Another of his inaugurations was the taxation of the black arable soil (of 'Iraq) on the basis of a fifth of its produce in kind, formerly the tax in kind had usually been a half. Another of his inaugurations was compelling people to profess the creation of the Koran. In his time this doctrine grew up. On this point Ahmad,

298

299 son of Hanbal, and others were examined, When al-Mamun died he bequeathed injunctions to his brother, al-Mu'tasim on this point, and when al-Mu'tasim succeeded, he disputed about it, and Ahmad, son of Hanbal, was flogged, as will be recorded in its place. Another of his innovations was the transfer of authority from the house of al-'Abbas to the house of 'Ali, and the changing of the folk of 'Iraq' into green clothes, which, they said, were the clothes of the folk of Paradise. An account of how this happened. al-Mamun had already given thought to the (question of) the Caliphate after himself, and wished to give it to a man worthy of it, to be quit of his moral responsibility,—so he asserted. It is related that he (180) considered the affairs of the senior members of both houses, the house of al-Abbas, and the house of 'Ali, and that he did not see in them anyone worthier, better, more pious or more religious than 'Ali, son of Musa ar-Rida. So he made him heir apparent and wrote a document to that effect in his own handwriting. He forced ar-Rida (to agree) to that. He<sup>1</sup> refused but later agreed and subscribed his hand on the outside of al-Mamun's document, to this effect, "I have agreed in obedience to the command, even though the (Shi'ite texts) Jafru and the Jama'ah indicate the opposite to that." Witnesses witnessed (the signatures of) them both. It was al-Fadl, son of Sahl, the minister of al-Mamun who was responsible for this affair and the instigator of it. The people took the oath of allegiance to 'Ali, son of Musa, after al-Mamun, and he was called ar-Rida of the house of Muhammad. al-Mamun ordered the people 300 to take off their black clothes and to wear green. This was in Khurasan, but when the 'Abbasids in Baghdad heard what al-Mamun had done, in transferring the Caliphate from the house of al-'Abbas to the house of 'Ali, and changing the clothes of his fathers and grandfathers to clothes of green, they disliked that, and deposed al-Mamun from the Caliphate in anger at his acts. They took the oath of allegiance to his paternal uncle, Ibrahim,

<sup>1</sup> ar-Rida.

son of al-Mahdi, who was eminent, a poet, eloquent, a man of letters and an excellent minstrel. Abu Faras, the son of Hamdan refers to him in his poem rhyming in m, when he says

“Was 'Ulayyah<sup>1</sup> one of you or one of them, and was the chief minstrel Ibrahim yours or theirs?”

That period was one of civil strife, battles and wars. When that reached al-Mamun he was much agitated, and executed al-Fadl, son of Sahl. After him died 'Ali, son of Musa, from eating grapes. It is said that, when al-Mamun saw the dislike of the people of Baghdad for what he had done in transferring the Caliphate to the house of 'Ali, and that they attributed this to al-Fadl, son of Sahl, and when he saw the civil strife starting, he suborned a band against al-Fadl, son of Sahl, so that they killed him in the bath. Then he seized them and brought them out to have their heads struck off. Thereupon they said to him, “You ordered us to do that, then you execute us!” He replied, “I am executing you on your own confession; as for that which you allege  
 301 against me, to wit that I ordered you to do that, the allegation lacks proof.” Then he struck off their heads. Their heads were brought to al-Hasan, son of Sahl, and he wrote to condole with him and appointed him to office. Other things too linked on to that which we shall record when making mention of the ministry of al-Fadl. Then he secretly introduced poison in a grape ‘to kill’ 'Ali, son of Musa, ar-Rida, for he was fond of grapes. He ate them, took too much and died immediately. Then he wrote to the 'Abbasids of Baghdad, saying to them, “That  
 (161) which you disliked in the matter of 'Ali, son of Musa, has disappeared, for the man is dead.” They returned him a very rough answer. al-Fadl, son of Sahl, had by now got complete influence over al-Mamun. He employed all means to further his interests, and in his efforts to win the Caliphate for him. He used to keep the news from him, and, when he knew anyone had gone

<sup>1</sup> A sister of Harun ar-Rashid.



into him or had given him some information, he hastened to harm him and punish him, so that people refrained from speaking to al-Mamun, and the news was withheld from him. When the civil strife broke forth in Baghdad and al-Mamun was deposed, the oath of allegiance being taken to Ibrahim, son of al-Mahdi, and the 'Abbasids disliked al-Mamun's conduct, for a while al-Fadl hid that from al-Mamun. Then 'Ali, son of Musa, ar-Rida, went in to him and said to him, "Commander of the Faithful, the people of Baghdad dislike you for having the oath of allegiance taken to me as heir apparent, and for changing the black clothes. They have deposed you, and have taken the oath of allegiance to your paternal uncle, Ibrahim, son of al-Mahdi." He brought to him a number of the generals to inform him of that. When al-Mamun asked them, they kept silence, saying, "We are afraid of al-Fadl, but if you guarantee us against damage from him we will tell you." So he guaranteed them, writing for them a document in his own hand. They informed him of the true state of affairs and told him of al-Fadhl's deceit, of his keeping him in ignorance of affairs, and of his concealing news from him. They said to him, "The soundest view is for you to go in person to Baghdad to put your affairs in order, otherwise the Caliphate will slip from your grasp." A short while after that occurred the execution of al-Fadl, and the death of ar-Rida, as has already been recounted. Then al-Mamun made great speed to go to Baghdad. When he reached it, Ibrahim, son of al-Mahdi, and al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi', had already fled. When he entered the City, the 'Abbasids met him and spoke to him about leaving off the green clothes, and of reverting to the black. Zainabu, daughter of Sulaiman, son of 'Ali, son of 'Abdullah, son of al-'Abbas, joined them. She was, in genealogy, equal to al-Mansur, and the house of al-'Abbas held her in great esteem. To her the Zainabites trace back their genealogy. She said to him, "Commander of the Faithful, what called you to transfer the Caliphate from your house to the house of 'Ali?" He replied, "(Paternal) aunt, I thought 'Ali when he held

the Caliphate benefited the house of al-'Abbas ; he made 'Abdullah governor of al-Basrah, and 'Ubaidullah of al-Yaman, and Quthum of Samarkand, but I have not  
 303 seen anyone of the folk of my house, when power came to them, repay it in (good) deeds to their children. So I wanted to repay it by benefiting them." She said to him, "Commander of the Faithful, you have more power to do good to the house of 'Ali if the supreme authority is in your hands, than you have to do them good if the power is in their hands." Then she asked him to change the green clothes ; he acceded to her request about that,  
 (102) and ordered the people to change them, and to revert to black clothes. Then al-Mamun pardoned his paternal uncle Ibrahim, son of al-Mahdi, and did not punish him but treated him well. He<sup>1</sup> became one of his boon companions. He<sup>2</sup> did likewise with al-Fadhl, son of ar-Rabi', for he was forbearing. He used to say, "If people know my love for clemency, they would come to me with their sins."

In his reign revolted Muhammad, son of Ja'afar as Sadiq, in Makkah. The oath of allegiance was taken to him as Caliph and they called him Commander of the Faithful. One of his family had persuaded him to that course, when he saw the amount of disagreement in Baghdad, the civil strife there and the revolts of the Kharijites. Muhammad, son of Ja'afar, was a senior member of the house of Abu Talib. Learning was transmitted through him, and he recorded traditions on the authority of his father in respect of much knowledge. He stayed in Makkah for a while. His son and one of his cousins had complete control of his affairs, and their conduct was not approved. al-Mamun sent an army  
 304 against them, and it obtained the victory. al-Mamun took him but pardoned him. In his reign, too, revolted Abu as-Saraya. His power waxed great and he claimed descent from one of the 'family of the prophet.' al-Hasan, son of Sahl, fought with him, and the victory lay with the army of al-Mamun. Abu as-Saraya was killed and after that al-Mamun's authority was undisputed, and civil

<sup>1</sup> Ibrahim.    <sup>2</sup> al-Mamun.

strife ceased. al-Mamun applied himself to the work of the Caliphate and to the organisation of the realm, in the manner of the most resolute and eminent rulers. At the end of (his reign) he went out to the frontier at Tus and died there. That was in the year 218. Of him one of the poets said :

“ We did not see his (lucky) stars suffice (to protect)  
 al-Mamun in the shade of his guarded realm,,  
 They abandoned<sup>1</sup> him in the two courtyards of Tarsus,  
 just as they abandoned<sup>1</sup> his father at Tus.”

An account of the ministry in his reign. The first of his ministers were the sons of Sahl. Their (period of) power was (as) a blaze on the forehead of the time, a pearl on the parting of the age. It was a resume of the Barmakid regime, for they were the creatures of the Barmakids. The first of them to be minister to al-Mamun was al-Fadl, son of Sahl. The ministry of the man with two powers, —al-Fadl son of Sahl,—for al-Mamun. He was called the man with two powers because he combined the sword and the pen. They said al-Fadl, son of Sahl, derived from the children of the Magian Persian kings. He was major domo to Yayha, son of Khalid. His father Sahl was a Magian and became a Moslem in the time of ar-  
 (168) Rashid. They said that when al-Fadl, son of Sahl,  
 305 saw the ability of al-Mamun in his youth and cast his horoscope, for he was experienced in astrology, the stars show him<sup>2</sup> that he<sup>3</sup> would become Caliph so he kept close to his side, served him, and administered his affairs till the Caliphate came to him,<sup>3</sup> and then he<sup>3</sup> made him<sup>2</sup> minister. al-Fadl was charitable and generous, rivalling the Barmakids in his largesses, severe in punishing, easy of approach, forbearing, eloquent, learned in the literature of kings, prudent in strategem, of good intelligence, acquisitive. He used to be called the minister, the Amir. Muslim, son of al-Walid the poet, was a boon companion of al-Fadl, son of Sahl, before he became minister, and recited to him his composition

<sup>1</sup> Or betrayed.    <sup>2</sup> al-Fadl.    <sup>3</sup> al-Mamun.

“One says, ‘He has no ambition.’ Not so, but he lacks means ;  
 No force sustains my purpose, and men are beggars or misers (all),  
 But be patient against some change of fate whereby circumstance may raise your circumstances.”

When the circumstances of al-Fadl improved, and he became minister, Muslim, son of al-Walid, sought him out, and, when he<sup>1</sup> saw him,<sup>2</sup> he<sup>1</sup> congratulated him,<sup>2</sup> saying to him, “This is the circumstance whereby your circumstances are raised,” he ordered him 30,000 dirhams and put him in charge of the post at Jarman, from which he obtained a great fortune. They say that the ambition of the man with two powers was very high, even before his affairs prospered. In the time of ar-Rashid, the tutor of al-Mamun once said to him, “al-Mamun has an excellent opinion of you, and I do not think it impossible that you may acquire through him a million dirhams. But al-Fadl was angry at that and said to him, “Are you an enemy? Have I done you a wrong?” The tutor replied, “No, indeed, I only said that out of affection for you.” He answered, “Why then do you say to me, 306 “You may acquire through him a million dirhams.” In truth, I company him not to gain wealth, much or little, but I company him in order that the order of this signet ring may be implemented in the east and in the west.” He added, “And it was not long before his hope was realised.” al-Fadl, son of Sahl, was executed in the fashion of which an account has already been given. That was in the year 202. Of him the poet said :

“To the hand of al-Fadl, son of Sahl, no comparison does justice,  
 It's palm (is made) for liberality, it's back for being kissed,

When opened for enriching, when clenched for death.”  
 The ministry of his brother al Hasan, son of Sahl, for

<sup>1</sup> The minister.    <sup>2</sup> The poet.

al-Mamun. al-Mamun made him minister after his brother al-Fadl. He showed him favour and healed the (164) wound of his grief at the execution of his brother. He married his daughter, Buran, and went with his family, friends, troops and generals to Famu's Sulh at Wasit. al-Hasan, son of Sahl, made great preparations to receive 307 them. He spent much money and broadcast pearls too many to count. Melons were even made of amber in the middle of each one of which were placed the deeds of one of his estates, which he then scattered abroad. He, into whose hand a melon fell, opened it, and the estate contained therein was handed over to him. The banquet was splendid beyond the extreme of beauty and plenty. So much so that al-Mamun was accused of extravagance on account of it. They say that the total expenses of the banquet of Famu's Sulh was fifty million dirhams. al-Hasan, son of Sahl, had spread for al-Mamun a mat woven of gold, and scattered thereon a thousand of the largest pearls. When al-Mamun saw it, he said, "A curse on Abu Nuwas. It is as though he saw our reception when he said :

"As though the smallest and the greatest of its bubbles were gravel of pearls on an earth of gold."

They say a man came to the door of al-Hasan, son of Sahl, seeking a present from him and his bounty. He was too busy to attend to him for a time, so the man wrote to him

"From wealth and understanding is help sought, when,  
standing at the gates of kings,

You know that I am lacking both, when you regard  
me, son of Persian squires,

308 Do not my clothes show you my want, and my face  
that I am the chief of mad men ?

God knows that the realm has no man save you, to  
keep safe both 'church and state'."

He ordered ten thousand dirhams to be given to him, and wrote on the paper :

" You hurried us, so a hurried and small gift of ours comes to you. Had you waited for us it had not been small,

But take the little and let it be as though you had not asked, and we shall be as though we had not been asked at all."

al-Hasan, son of Sahl, stood higher than all men in favour with al-Mamun, who was extremely fond of conversing with him. When he came to see him he kept him a long while talking. Whenever he wanted to go away, he stopped him, so that al-Hasan's time was exclusively taken up with that, though other requirements pressed on him. So he came late in presenting himself at al-Mamun's audiences, and one of his clerks, such as Ahmad, son of Abu Khalid, or Ahmad, son of Yusuf, or another used to deputise for him. Finally melancholy overtook him originating from his sorrow for his brother. He kept to his house to take medicine, and secluded himself from the people ; all the same his was the highest rank of all men, though al-Mamun made Ahmad, son of Abu Khalid, minister, who, all the time, sought the services of al-Hasan, son of Sahl, and whenever al-Hasan attended at the place of al-Mamun, his was the highest rank of all men. When al-Hasan, son of Sahl, kept to his house, a poet lampooned him as follows :

(165)

309

" The regime of al-Hasan, son of Sahl, has turned its back, and I have not wetted my throat with its dew,

Grieve not for what has escaped you, may God make to weep the eyes of him who makes you weep."

al-Hasan, son of Sahl, died in the year 236, in the reign of al-Mutawakkil. The ministry of Ahmad, son of Abu Khalid, the squinting, for al-Mamun. He was a freedman. Ahmad was of great wealth, one of the wisest of men, a notable secretary, eloquent, clever and prudent in affairs. Al-Mamun said to him, " al-Hasan, son of Sahl, is keeping his house, and I want to make you minister. Ahmad

tried to avoid becoming minister, saying "Commander of the Faithful, excuse me the title of minister, and require me to do the duties of it. Put between me and the commons a rank, which my friend may hope, and which my enemy may fear I may attain, for beyond the limit is only collapse." al-Mamun approved his reply but said, "You needs must have it," and made him minister. When al-Mamun made Tahir, son of al-Husain, governor of Khurasan, he consulted Ahmad, son of Abu Khalid, about him. Ahmad approved the idea of making Tahir governor. al-Mamun said to Ahmad, "I fear he will be treacherous, abandon (his allegiance) and refuse obedience." Ahmad replied, "I accept full responsibility for that." So al-Mamun made him governor, and a little later, al-Mamun was displeased with his administration, and wrote him a threatening letter to which Tahir wrote a reply that angered al-Mamun. Then he cut out his name from the sermon for three Fridays, the news of which reached al-Mamun, who said to Ahmad, son of Abu Khalid, "You advised making Tahir governor, and accepted responsibility for what he did. You see what he has done in cutting the sermon, and refusing obedience. I will surely cut off your head if you do not put this matter right and redress it as you have spoilt it." Ahmad replied, "Commander of the Faithful, be tranquil. After a few days the post will bring you news of his death." Then Ahmad, son of Abu Khalid gave Tahir a present, containing poisoned sauces,—for Tahir was fond of sauce,—which he ate and died immediately. It is said that when Ahmad, son of Abu Khalid, made Tahir governor of Khurasan, he anticipated this and gave him a servant, to whom he had handed poison, saying to him, "When he cuts al-Mamun's name out of the sermon then give him this poison in some food that he likes. So when Tahir cut al-Mamun's name out of the sermon, the servant gave him poison in sauce, which he ate and died immediately. The news came by post to al-Mamun after a few days, and that was one of things which enhanced the status of Ahmad, son of Abu Khalid. Ahmad died a natural death in the year 210.

311 The ministry for al-Mamun of Ahmad, son of Yusuf, son of al-Qasim. He was a freedman and an eminent secretary, well read and a poet, intelligent, circumspect in state affairs and court etiquette. They say that, when Ahmad, son of Abu Khalid died, al-Mamun consulted al-Hasan, son of Sahl, as to whom he should appoint as minister. He advised him (to appoint) Ahmad, son of Yusuf, and Abu 'Ibad, son of Yahya, saying "They two of all men best know the character of the Commander of the Faithful." Then he<sup>1</sup> said to him,<sup>2</sup> "Choose one of the two of them for me," so he chose for him Ahmad, son of Yusuf, and al-Mamun entrusted to him his ministry. Al-Mamun consulted Ahmad, son of Yusuf, about a man, whom Ahmad, son of Yusuf, described and whose good points he mentioned. Then al-Mamun said to him, "Ahmad, you have praised him despite your bad opinion of him, and his hostility to you." Ahmad replied, "Because my position with regard to you is as the poet said :

"It is sufficient recompense for the benefits you have conferred on me that I tell you the truth about friend and foe alike,

And that, when you summon me for some purpose,  
your wish be stronger than my own."

Ascribed to him are good verses, amongst them :

"My heart loves you, my heart's desire, and hates him  
who loves you,

That I may be the sole object of your desire ; would  
that I knew how your heart was !"

312 On the Persian New Year's day, he gave al-Mamun a present, to the value of a million dirhams, and wrote therewith :

"The slave owes a debt, which he needs must pay,  
despite the greatness of the master and the nobility  
of his merits,

Do you not see us making gifts to God of His wealth,  
and that He accepts them though He can do  
without them ?"

<sup>1</sup> al-Mamun. <sup>2</sup> al-Hasan.



al-Mamun said, "A wise man has made a beautiful present." The cause of his death was that one day he went in to al-Mamun, while al-Mamun was perfuming himself. al-Mamun produced the censer from beneath himself and said, "Put it under Ahmad," (intending) to honour him. But his enemies reported to al-Mamun that he said, "What is this stinginess over perfume? Why did he not order new perfume for me?" al-Mamun was angry on account of this, saying, "He accuses me of stinginess when he well knows my daily expenditure is 6,000 dinars, and that I intended to honour him with what was beneath my clothes." Then he went in to him when he was perfuming himself another time, and al-Mamun said, "Put beneath him in the censer a bit of (167) amber, and cover him with something to prevent the perfume escaping." They did that to him and he endured it till he was overcome and cried out "I am dying, dying!" Then they uncovered him and he had fainted. He went away to his home, wherein he tarried some months ill (168) with asthma, till he died of that sickness. It is also said that he died of vexation owing to some hasty slip he made on account of which al-Mamun was annoyed with him. The ministry for al-Mamun of Abu 'Ibad Thabit, son of Yahya, son of Yasar ar-Razi. Abu 'Ibad was a secretary versed in mathematics, quick tempered, violent and foolish. They say that when al-Mamun saw him approaching he used to quote verses from Da'bil, including :

"It is as though he were a mad man escaped from the convent of Ezekiel, dragging the fetters of (his) chains."

It was said to al-Mamun, "The poet Da'bil has lampooned you." He replied, "How should the man who was bold enough to lampoon Abu 'Ibad not lampoon me?", the meaning of this remark being, "How should the man who was bold enough to lampoon Abu 'Ibad despite his violence, his excitability, and his quick temper, not be bold enough to lampoon me with my mildness and love of clemency?" Abu 'Ibad was extremely hasty

and quick tempered, often he became annoyed with some-one before him and threw the inkpot at him, or reviled him with obscenities. al-Ghalibi the poet went into him and recited to him :

“ When we halt our riding beasts at the minister’s,  
seeking refuge in his generosity, he gives us  
largesse,

The millstone of the Imam’s realm is fixed securely  
on Thabit, and he gives us our fill of justice and  
beneficence,

He receives visitors with joy and generosity, but the  
breakers of oaths with swords and spears,

He who is ever to the people as a rain cloud producing  
pasture, giving freely in his generosity to help.”

But when he reached his phrase “ in his generosity ” he halted and stammered over it, and kept repeating “ in his generosity ” several times till Abu ’Ibad became annoyed, and his temper got the better of him, so that he said, “ Old man, ‘cuckolded’ or ‘clapped,’ and let us be ! ” Then all who were in the audience chamber laughed. His ill humour departed, too, and he laughed with the others. al-Ghalibi completed his rhyme with “ to help,” and he<sup>1</sup> rewarded him.<sup>2</sup> The ministry of Abu ’Abdullah Muhammad, son of Yazdad, son of Suwaid, for al-Mamun, whose last minister he was. He was from Khurasan. They were Magians, then became Moslem, and stayed in the service of the Caliphs. Suwaid was the first of them to become a Moslem. His father had died when he was young, his mother entrusted him to one of the Persian clerks, and he carried out his duties in a praiseworthy way. He was deeply versed in Persian literature. Then he was unremitting in attendance to (his duties in) the Marv office. On a rainy day the head of the office was present and all the clerks and deputies were late in arriving. Suwaid, the grandfather of Muhammad, was present, and the head of the office required some calculations. He had no clerk in the office, so he under-

<sup>1</sup> The minister. <sup>2</sup> The poet.

took the calculations himself, made a beginning with them, and put some of them on paper. Then drowsiness overcame him, and his attention wandered from it. He saw Suwaid and handed the calculations to him, saying, "Take care of these till I wake up." Then the head of the office slept, but Suwaid examined the calculations, completed them and made a fair copy of them in good writing, casting the total correctly. The head of the office awoke and asked him for the calculation, which he<sup>1</sup> handed to him.<sup>2</sup> He<sup>2</sup> found them finished in the most correct manner and in excellent style. Then he said, "My lad, who did these calculations?" "I," he replied. "Did you fair the script?" he said. He answered, "Yes." Then he ordered him to take charge of the office basket which contained his calculations, the fundamentals of his work and the things he had need to remember. He allocated to him a stipend, and he served in various capacities till he acquired considerable means, and attained high rank. Then Muhammad became a man of letters and excelled in everything with the result that al-Mamun made him minister, and entrusted to him all the conduct of affairs. Muhammad was an eloquent poet. From his verses is (the following) :

"Fatun has troubled by the glance of her eye and in  
 love she has deceived one who deceives not,  
 She asserts that I love another than her but how can  
 that be, when (my) eyes have never left her?  
 She, love of whom is concealed and hidden in my  
 heart displacing life (itself) !  
 She, who alleges that I am a deceiver, (a thing) this  
 which cannot be in love of her !  
 Take my pledge from my eye and my look, that will  
 be surely enough for you that I am true."

al-Mamun died while he was minister. The period of al-Mamun and his ministers ended. Then after him, ruled his brother al-Mu'tasim, Abu Ishaq Muhammad. The oath of allegiance was taken to him on the day of

<sup>1</sup> Suwaid. <sup>2</sup> The head of the office.

al-Mamun's death. An account of the year has already preceded. al-Mu'tasim was of sound judgment and extremely strong. He could lift a thousand 'pounds' and walk several paces with them, and was well known for his bravery. He was named the eighth for one of ten reasons. He was the eighth of the children of al-'Abbas ; the eighth Caliph ; he became Caliph when he was eighteen<sup>1</sup> years old, his Caliphate lasted eight years and eight months ; he died aged forty-eight ; he was born in Sha'ban which is the eighth month ; he left behind eight sons and eight daughters ; he made eight expeditions, and he left eight million dirhams. The

(189) reign of al-Mu'tasim was one of conquest and warfare. It was he who conquered 'Amoriyah. An account of how that came about. The reason of al-Mu'tasim's expedition against 'Amoriyah was that the Emperor of Byzantium invaded Muslim territory and sacked one of its fortresses, called Zabatrah, killing its garrison, and  
 817 enslaving the children and the women. It is said that there was amongst the prisoners a woman of the house of Hashim who was heard exclaiming, " Help, Mu'tasim ! " al-Mu'tasim heard what the Byzantine Emperor had done to the Muslims, and he thought it a great wrong and was much vexed thereat. He was told what the Hashimite woman had said, and he himself said when in his audience hall, " Coming, coming." He got up at once, and shouted out in his castle, " To horse, to horse." Then he mounted his steed, tying behind it a 'halter,' an iron peg, and a haversack with his rations in it. Then he went forth and ordered his troops to go forth too. He made preparations such as no Caliph had made before. When he had assembled his troops, completed his preparations, and determined to go, he summoned the judges and witnesses and called them to witness that he made a trust of his properties and wealth in three parts, one-third to God Most High, one-third to his children and relations, and one-third to his freedmen. Then he set out and obtained a victory over some of the Byzantines. He then

<sup>1</sup> A mistake. Should be 38.

asked which was the most strongly fortified, the mightiest and held by them as being most important of their cities. A Byzantine said to him, "'Amoriyah is the very eye of their land," so al-Mu'tasim proceeded thither, mustered his soldiers against it, besieged it, took it, entered it, killed those in it and in its districts, and took prisoners and captives. He exerted himself in that till he destroyed 'Amoriyah, and effaced its traces. He took one of its gates, which was of iron and of great size, and brought it to Baghdad. To-day, it is one of the gateways of the Caliph's palace, called "the Common Gate." Abu Tammam at-Tayyi accompanied him, and praised him <sup>518</sup> in the poem rhyming in "B," beginning ;

"The sword is the most truthful of the children of the books, in its edge is the difference between earnest and play,

Caliph of God,—may God reward your efforts for the root of true religion, Islam, and honour,

You have perceived the greatest satisfaction, and you did not think to gain it save over the bridge of toil."

Also from its phrases alluding to the great efforts of al-Mu'tasim in killing them and eradicating them :

"On that day the sun did not rise for them upon the founder of a family, nor did it set upon an unmarried man."

And from its phrases pointing to the violence of his hatred against them, is (this) saying of his :

"The camp in which Mayyah dwelt, and which Ghailan wandered round was not a more beautiful mound than your mound of ruins.

(170) Nor cheeks, even though reddened by a blush more lovely to my sight than your dust covered cheek."

The battle of 'Amoriyah was in the year 223, and it was <sup>519</sup> al-Mu'tasim who built "The joy of the beholder."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Surra-man-ra'a.

An account of the reason for building Samarra, and an explanation of how that came about. Baghdad was the capital of the kingdom, and in it, after al-Mansur, was the Caliph's throne. But Harun ar-Rashid preferred ar-Raqqah in Syria, and dwelt there in addition to that. ar-Raqqah was for him a place of diversion, but his castles his treasuries, his women and his children were in Baghdad in the castle al-Khuld. The royal thrones of those caliphs who succeeded him were in Baghdad. But al-Mu'tasim in his reign feared his troops therein and distrusted them, so he said, "Look for a place for me to which I may go out, in which I may build a city, and in which I may make a camp, for I fear some emergency (arising) from the troops of Baghdad, so that I may be on high ground and able to come against them by land or by water. Then his choice fell on Samarra, where he built and to which he went out. It is said that al-Mu'tasim sought slaves in large numbers so that Baghdad became too narrow to contain them, and the people suffered injuries from them. They crowded them out of their houses, made advances to the women, and, daily, often killed a number of them. One day al-Mu'tasim rode out and an old man met him, who said to al-Mu'tasim, "Abu Ishaq," and the troops wanted to beat him but al-Mu'tasim prevented them and said to him, "What is the matter with you, old man?" He replied, "May God not repay you with good (for what you have done) as a neighbour. You have been our neighbour for a while and we have seen you to be a bad neighbour. You have brought us these foreigners,—

220 your Turkish slaves,—and settled them in our midst. Through them you have made our children orphans and our women widows, we will surely fight against you with the arrow of the dawn,"—meaning prayer. al-Mu'tasim listened to that and entered his house and he was not seen to ride abroad save on a day the like of that day.<sup>1</sup> He mounted and prayed the feast prayer with the people, then went to the place Samarra, and built it. That was in the year 221. When al-Mu'tasim was ill with the

<sup>1</sup> Or, possibly, "till that day year."

illness of which he died, he went down (river) in a boat, accompanied by Zanam, the flautist, who was the best of his time. He began to pass by his castles and gardens on the bank of the Tigris, and said to Zanam, "sing."

"Homes of which the ruins are not decayed, God forbid that your ruins should decay,

I weep not for your ruins but I weep for my life in you that is departing,

(171) And life is the sweetest thing for which a lad can weep, and the grieved one needs must seek solace."

When he was at the point of death he began to say, "Strength has gone, no trick remains," then he died, and that was in the year 227. An account of the ministry in his reign. The first of his ministers was his secretary before his accession to the Caliphate, al-Fadl, son of Marwan. He came from Bardan. He was ignorant, <sup>321</sup> lacking the learning of the schools and natural ability. His morals were bad and he was ignorant of affairs. Of him a contemporary poet said :

"You play the Pharoah,<sup>1</sup> Fadl, son of Marwan, but consider, before you have been al-Fadl, al-Fadl and al-Fadl ;

Three kings have passed on their way, fetters, slavery and murder have eliminated them."

The three were, al-Fadl, son of Yahya, son of Khalid; al-Fadl, son of Sahl, and al-Fadl, son of ar-Rabi'. al-Fadl, son of Marwan, had great influence over al-Mu'tasim, and the people envied him for the favour in which he<sup>2</sup> held him,<sup>3</sup> but later he<sup>1</sup> disgraced him<sup>2</sup> and took all his wealth, but spared his life. He lived for a while, serving in various capacities, till he died in the reign of al-Mu'tasim. The ministry for al-Mu'tasim of Ahmad, son of 'Amar, son of Shadi. Then Ahmad, son of 'Amar, was his minister. He was a man of means, of the people of Mudhar, but he was transferred to al-Basrah, where he bought property and his wealth increased. He was a

<sup>1</sup> i.e., the tyrant. <sup>2</sup> al-Mu'tasim. <sup>3</sup> al-Fadl.

millar, then went up to Baghdad, where his circumstances improved. They said that he daily expended in alms a hundred dinars. \*al-Fadl, son of Marwan, had already described him as trustworthy to al-Mu'tasim, so, when he disgraced al-Fadl, al-Mu'tasim's glance fell on no other than Ahmad, son of 'Amar, and he made him  
 322 minister ! He was ignorant of the etiquette of the ministry, and of him a contemporary poet said :

“Heavens, Lord ! Creator ! Designer ! You have  
     become minister, son of 'Amar,  
 I deny destiny if you have not thereby passed all  
     limits !”

He remained for a while as minister to al-Mu'tasim till a letter arrived from one of the provinces, in which mention was made of the fertility of the district, and of the abundance of new grass. al-Mu'tasim asked Ahmad, son of 'Amar, about new grass, and he did not know what to say, so he called Muhammad, son of 'Abdu'l Malik az-Ziyat, who was one of his intimates and his followers, and asked him about new grass. He replied, “The first growths are called  
 (172) ‘green shoots,’ when it is somewhat high, then it is called ‘new grass.’ But when it is dry and sere, then it is ‘hay’.” Then al-Mu'tasim said to Ahmad, son of 'Amar, “Look you to the offices, and this man will deal with the correspondence for me.” Later he made him minister, dismissing the son of 'Amar honourably. The ministry for al-Mu'tasim of Muhammad, son of 'Abdu'l Malik az-Ziyat. His father was a merchant in the time of al-Mamun of easy circumstances. Muhammad grew up, had a literary education, read (the Koran), and obtained understanding for he was sharp witted. He excelled in everything till he became unique in his time in knowledge, understanding, shrewdness, calligraphy, poetry, letters, in experience of the precedents of government and the ceremonial of courts,  
 323 up to the reign of al-Mu'tasim, who appointed him minister as has already been recounted. He fulfilled the duties of the ministry as no predecessor of his had done. He was tyrannical, haughty, ill mannered, hard hearted, detestable



to the people. al-Mu'tasim died while he was minister. al-Mu'tasim had ordered a sum (to be paid) to his son al-Wathiq, and transmitted it to him through the son of az-Ziyat, who stopped it and advised al-Mu'tasim not to give him anything. al-Mu'tasim accepted his advice, and revoked that which he had ordered (to be given) to al-Wathiq, who then wrote a letter in his own hand swearing therein by the (oath to take the) pilgrimage, freeing of slaves and giving of alms that, if he succeeded to the Caliphate, he would kill the son of az-Ziyat in a horrible manner. When al-Mu'tasim died and al-Wathiq sat on the Caliph's throne, he remembered the affair of the son of ez-Ziyat and wished to punish him. But he feared that he would not find his equal, so he said to the chamberlain, "Bring in to me ten of the clerks," and, when they came in to him, he tested them, but there was none amongst them who satisfied him. So he said to the chamberlain, "Bring in him of whom the realm has need, Muhammad, son of az-Ziyat." He<sup>1</sup> brought him<sup>2</sup> in and he<sup>2</sup> stood before him,<sup>3</sup> afraid. Then he<sup>3</sup> said to a servant, "Bring me such and such a document," and he brought him the document which he had written, and in which he swore that he would surely kill the son of az-Ziyat. He handed it to the son of az-Ziyat, and said, "Read it." When he<sup>4</sup> had read it, he said, "Commander of the Faithful, I am a slave. If you punish him, you have the right to do so. But if you expiate your oath and allow him to live, that will be more like you." Then al-Wathiq said, "In truth

<sup>324</sup> I only spare you for fear that the realm may be without one like you. I will expiate my oath, for I can replace money, but I cannot replace the like of you." Then he expiated his oath, appointed him minister, advanced him, and entrusted to him the conduct of affairs. The son of az-Ziyat was an excellent poet. In one of his poems he made an elegy for al-Mu'tasim and praised al-Wathiq :

<sup>1</sup> The chamberlain.

<sup>2</sup> Muhammad.

<sup>3</sup> The Caliph.

<sup>4</sup> Muhammad.

(179) "I said, when they hid you in the grave and hands  
clapped water and mud above you,  
Go, for you were a good helper to this world below  
and a good helper to the true faith,  
God could only help a community that had lost the  
like of you by such a one as Harun."

Thereafter Muhammad, son of 'Adu'l Malik az-Ziyat, remained minister to al-Wathiq during his Caliphate. No other minister than he was made till al-Wathiq died and his brother al-Mutawakkil succeeded, who apprehended him and executed him. It is said that the son of az-Ziyat had made a barrel of iron with nails pointing inwards, therewith to torture whomsoever he wished to torture, and that he himself was the first to be put therein. It was said to him, "Taste what you made others taste." The period of al-Mu'tasim and his ministers finished, then after him ruled his son, Harun al-Wathiq, to whom the oath of allegiance was taken in 227. al-Wathiq was one of the best of their Caliphs. He was eminent, clever, intelligent, eloquent and a poet. He resembled al-Mamun actively and passively. When he succeeded he treated well his cousins of the house of Talib, and was kind to them. In his reign no great conquests occurred, nor notable events worthy of record. al-Wathiq died in the year 233. An account of the state of the ministry in his reign. al-Wathiq only appointed as minister Muhammad, son of 'Abdu'l Malik az-Ziyat, his father's minister, an account of whose affairs has preceded. al-Wathiq died while he was minister. The period of al-Wathiq ended, then, after him, ruled his brother Ja'far al-Mutawakkil. al-Mutawakkil was extremely opposed to the family of 'Ali, and turned into ploughland the grave of al-Husain, as he did. God refused to do other than perfect his light.<sup>1</sup> Those who excuse him<sup>2</sup> say that it was his brother, and (that he was) like al-Mamun in inclination to the house of 'Ali, but that he was surrounded by a number of people opposed to the 'holy house,' who were ever urging him

<sup>1</sup> i.e., through shame and suffering. <sup>2</sup> al-Mutawakkil.

to take steps against them. But the former (version) is the truer, and, without doubt he was violently opposed to "the party." Because of that his son killed him in jealousy and out of tribal pride. A brief account of his being killed. Between him and his son al-Muntasir was estrangement. Each of them disliked and annoyed the other, so that al-Muntasir agreed with a number of the  
 326  
 (174) generals to kill him, and also to kill al-Fath, son of Khaqan, who was the senior and most important of his generals. They attacked him when he was drinking, battered him with their swords, killed him, and killed, too, al-Fath with him. They gave it out that al-Fath had killed him,<sup>1</sup> so "we killed him<sup>2</sup> on his account." His son sat on the throne after him. That was in the year 247. An account of the state of the ministry in his time. When the oath of recognition was taken to him as Caliph he appointed as minister Muhammad, son of 'Abdu'l Malik az-Ziyat, for some days, then he disgraced him, apprehended him and executed him, as has already been recounted. 'Then he appointed as secretary one of his clerks, named Abu'l Wazir, without giving him the title of minister. He acted as secretary to him for a short while, then he disgraced him and fined him 200,000 dinars. He appointed as minister al-Jarjara'i. The ministry of Abu Ja'far Muhammad, son of al-Fadhl al Jarjar'ai for al-Mutawakkil. He was an old man, witty, well educated, an authority on music for which he was famous, and he stood high in al-Mutawakkil's favour who made him minister for a while, after which stories to his discredit became numerous; so al-Mutawakkil dismissed him, saying, "I am tired of old men, I want to make a young man minister." 'Ubaidullah, son of Yahya, son of Khaqan, was recommended to him. The ministry of 'Ubaidullah, son of Yahya, son of Khaqan. 'Ubaidullah was a lucky man, with knowledge of mathematics and finance, but unstable. He was fortunate and his lucky star used to conceal his faults. He was generous  
 327 and good-natured, his generosity also covering many of his faults, so that on account of it he used to find forgiveness.

<sup>1</sup> The Caliph.    <sup>2</sup> al-Fath.

It is said that the Governor of Egypt sent to him 200,000 dinars, with thirty chests of clothes of Egyptian make. When they were brought before him, he said to the agent of the Governor of Egypt, "No, indeed, I will not accept them, I will not impose such a burden on him." Then he opened the boxes and took from them a nice handkerchief, which he put under his thigh, and ordered that the money be taken to the office's storeroom and checked there. With it he bought house property for the Governor of Egypt. 'Ubaidullah was easy-going and the troops were fond of him. When civil strife broke out on the murder of al-Mutawakkil, 'Ubaidullah was afraid, but the troops gathered at his door and said to him, "You treated us well during your period of office as minister. The least we can do for you is to protect you, and guard you in civil strife such as this." They remained at his door and guarded him. al-Mutawakkil died while he was minister. The period of al-Mutawakkil and his ministers ended, then his son, Muhammad al-Muntasir reigned (175) after him. The oath of allegiance was taken to him on the morning after the night in which his father was murdered. al-Muntasir was energetic, rash, and a great shedder of blood. When his father was murdered, the people said that he would not live long after him, and they 328 likened to him Shiruyah, son of Kisra, who murdered his father and did not enjoy the kingdom after him. They said, al-Muntasir murdered his father and when the oath of acknowledgement as Caliph was taken to him, that he sat on a carpet the like of which had never been seen. On it was a marvellous inscription in Persian. al-Muntasir looked at it and thought it pretty. He said to those who were present, "Do you know its meaning?" But they drew back, saying, "We do not know." Then he summoned a man,—a Persian and a stranger, and ordered him to read it. The man drew back, and al-Muntasir said to him, "Speak out, you will not be harmed, nor will it be a crime in you." Then the man said, "On this carpet is inscribed, "I, Shiruyah, son of Kisra, killed my father and I did not enjoy the kingdom after

him for six months." al-Muntasir drew an ill omen from that and rose from the place when he was sitting in anger. He did not complete six months before he died and that was in the year 208. An account of the ministry in his time. When the oath of acknowledgement was taken to him as Caliph, he made his secretary, Ahmad, son of al-Khasib, minister. The ministry for al-Muntasir of Ahmad, son of al-Khasib. Ahmad was short of stature, and his understanding was impugned. He had the manly qualities, was quick-tempered and frivolous, so that anyone who put up with him could achieve with him his desire. One of the principal beggars approached him and persisted with him till he squeezed against him, and crushed his foot in the stirrup. Ahmad was enraged, disengaged his foot from the stirrup, and kicked him in the chest. Of this a poet said :

" Say to the Caliph, 'Cousin of Muhammad, tie up  
your minister, for he is a kicker,  
'With his tongue he has assailed our honour, and  
our chests are a battleground for his feet'."

al-Muntasir died while Ahmad, son of al-Khasib, was still minister, then after him, reigned al-Musta'in,—Ahmad, son of Muhammad, son of al-Mu'tasim. When al-Muntasir died, the generals and chief slaves met and said, "If we appoint one of the children of al-Mutwaakkil, he will require his blood at our hands, and destroy us." So they agreed to take the oath of allegiance to al-Musta'in, saying, "He is the grandson of our master, al-Mu'tasim, and, if we take the oath of allegiance to him, the Caliphate (176) will not pass from the children of al-Mu'tasim. So they took the oath to him in the year 248. Those were days of civil strife, wars and revolts of the Khawarij. Amongst those who revolted with them was the slain of Shahi, Abu'l Husain Yahya, son of 'Umar, son of Yahya, son of al-Husain, son of Zaid, son of 'Ali, son of al-Husain, son of 'Ali, son of Abu Talib. An account of how that happened. Yahya, son of 'Umar, the slain of Shahi, had come forth

from Khurasan in the reign of al-Mutawakkil. He was in straitened circumstances, and encumbered with debt, concerning which he spoke to one of the principal friends of al-Mutawakkil. He was annoyed with him and imprisoned him in Samarra. Then his family went bail for him and he released him. He went down thence to Baghdad, where he lived for a while in a condition of unpleasant poverty. He was an excellent man, a doer of good works, of exemplary conduct. Then he returned to Samarra a second time, and spoke to one of the Amirs of al-Mutawakkil about his circumstances. He was angry with him and said, "For what reason will such as you be given (anything)? So he returned to Baghdad, and thence went down to al-Kufah, where he summoned the people to (follow) ar-Rida, of the house of Muhammad. People from the folk" of al-Kufah,—those of the best judgment in "the Party,"—followed him, also some of the (desert) Arabs. He attacked al-Kufah, took the contents of the treasury which he distributed amongst his followers, brought out those in the prisons, and expelled its Governor from al-Kufah. His following became large, and the Governor-General of Baghdad,—Muhammad, son of 'Abdullah, son of Tahir,—sent an army against him. They met at Shahi,—a village near al-Kufah. The victory lay with the army of the son of Tahir. The dust cleared away and Yahya, son of 'Umar, was slain. His head was carried to Muhammad, son of 'Abdullah, son of Tahir, in Baghdad, and Muhammad, son of 'Abdullah, son of Tahir, sat (in state) to receive congratulations on that (event), and people came in in crowds to congratulate him. Amongst them was a man of the children of Ja'far, son of Abu Talib; who said to him, "General! You have been congratulated for killing a man for whom the Prophet of God, had he been alive, would have condoled."

331 Muhammad, son of 'Abdullah, looked down for a time, then got up and the people went away. The poets lamented him. One of those who lamented him was the son of ar-Rumi in his poem rhyming in J of which the beginning is:

"Before you ! so look which of your two roads you will follow,—two different paths, one of them straight, one crooked,

Peace and sweet basil, repose and mercy be upon you,  
and a stretch of mild shade,

May the divided marigolds not cease to quiver over  
the earth whose neighbour you are."

It is a searing poem, in which he aimed at the house of al-'Abbas, and we leave it to avoid sin. The battle of  
 177 Shahi befell in the year 250. Others than he of the house of Abu Talib revolted against him, but the victory in all these wars lay with him. Know that al-Musta'in was weak in his judgment, understanding and administration, and in his time there was much civil strife, and his reign extremely disordered. He had no praiseworthy characteristics save that he was generous and bountiful. He was deposed in the year 252, then later, killed. An  
 332 account of the ministry in his reign. When al-Musta'in succeeded, he confirmed Ahmad, son of al-Khasib, as minister for two months, then, after him, he appointed Abu Salih 'Abdullah, son of Muhammad, son of Yazdad, as minister. The ministry of Abu Salih Muhammad, son of Yazdad. He had learning and merit. His minutes and replies were of the best of their kind. One of his minutes to a man was, "No harm will be done to you if no harm comes from you." They say that, when Abu Salih, son of Yazdad, became minister to al-Musta'in, he set the finances in order, and that was obnoxious to the Amirs of the realm. He had reduced them to such straits that they threatened to kill him. He then fled, and affairs became confused. At one time al-Musta'in took as secretaries Muhammad, son of al-Fadhl al-Jarjara'i, and Shuja', son of al-Qasim, but neither of the two of them assumed the title of minister. That period did not last long, and it was one of civil strife, wars and much confusion. The period of al-Musta'in and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled al-Mu'tazz billah,—Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad, son of al-Mutawakkil. The oath

of allegiance was taken to him as Caliph in the year 252, following the deposition of al-Musta'in. al-Mu'tazz was comely of person, of beautiful appearance. There was nothing against his conduct, judgment and understanding, except that the Turks, after the murder of al-Mutawakkil, had obtained control of the kingdom, and weakened the (authority of) the Caliphs, so that the Caliph became as it  
 333 were a prisoner in their hands. If they wished they spared him, if they wished they deposed him, and, if they wished,  
 (178) they put him to death. When al-Mu'tazz sat on the throne of the Caliphate, his intimates sat (too), and they summoned astrologers, saying to them, "Look to see how long he will live and how long he will remain Caliph." In the assembly was a wit, who replied, "I know better than these (astrologers) the duration of both his life and of his Caliphate." They said to him, "Then for how long do you say he will live and for how long rule?" He answered, "For as long as the Turks desire." And there was not one in the assembly who did not laugh. In the reign of al-Mu'tazz appeared Ya'qub, son of al-Laith, the coppersmith. He obtained control over Fars, and collected a numerous multitude. al-Mu'tazz was unable to oppose him, then the Turks attacked al-Mu'tazz, and asked him for money. He excused himself to them saying, "The treasuries are empty." Then they agreed to depose him and kill him, so they gathered at his door and sent in to him telling him to come out to them. But he made excuses that he had drunk medicine, so they burst in on him, beat him with their maces, tore his shirt and put him in the sun. He kept lifting one leg and putting down the other on account of the violent heat and tried to protect himself with his hand as some of them buffeted him. They they put him in a room and blocked up its door till he died, after they had borne witness to his self abdication. That was in the year 255. An account of the state of the ministry in his time. The first of his ministers was Abu'l Fadl Ja'far, son of Mahmud al-Askafi. The ministry of al-Askafi for al-Mu'tazz. He  
 334 possessed neither learning nor letters, but he won hearts



by his generosity and gifts. al-Mu'tazz used to dislike him, and they used to charge him with Shi'ism. Some of the Turks liked, others disliked him, and civil strife sprang up on his account, so al-Mu'tazz dismissed him. The ministry of Abu Musa 'Isa, son of Farkhan Shah, for al-Mu'tazz. He was generous. It was said of him that, before he took office as minister, he was in charge of one of the offices, and was dismissed therefrom with a sum of a thousand dinars owing to him. He persuaded his successor in office to authorise payment to him and he charged one of his agents with its payment. When the money was received that agent endorsed it to 'Isa, son of Farkhan Shah, informed him that the money had arrived, and asked his permission to bring it to him. He<sup>1</sup> had a friend and wrote to him<sup>2</sup> (saying) that So and So, the poet, has been in attendance on me for a long time without receiving anything from me, so pay him this money. So he paid the money to the poet, who took it and went away. On his account also civil strife arose amongst the

(179) Turks, so al-Mu'tazz dismissed him. The ministry of Abu Ja'far Ahmad, son of Isra'il al-Anbari for al-Mu'tazz. He was one of the most intelligent of the able clerks. They said that he used to keep in his memory all the principal items of finance, both in revenue and expenditure. They said that he once lost the accounts from the office and replaced them from memory, further that, when the accounts were found, they tallied with what he had said,

835 neither more nor less. Then the Turks attacked Ahmad, son of Isra'il, seized him, beat him and confiscated his wealth. al-Mu'tazz took pity on him, and sent him to the foremost Turk, who was Salih, son of Wasif, but he ignored both of them, imprisoned him, and, thereafter in the reign of al-Muhtadi, beat him till he died. When Salih, son of Wasif, acted as he did to Ahmad, son of Isra'il, he summoned Ja'far, son of Mahmud al-Askafi, and appointed him minister to al-Mu'tazz for the second time. An account of him has preceded. When he took office as minister for the second time, one of the poets said;

<sup>1</sup> Isa.    <sup>2</sup> The agent.

“ My soul, do not tempt me by falsehood, and heal my heart with promises ;  
 Wait ! for I have seen what God has ‘ granted ’<sup>1</sup> to Ja’far, son of Mahmud.”

Then, after him, reigned al-Muhtadi ‘illah, Abu ‘Abdullah Muhammad, son of al-Wathiq. al-Muhtadi was one of the best of the Caliphs in conduct, the nicest of them in way and manner of life, the most patently pious, and the most religious. He used to copy ‘Umar, son of ‘Abdu’l ‘Aziz, and to say that he was ashamed that there had been one of the house of Umayyah like him, and that there had not been one of the house of al-‘Abbas like him. He used to sit judicially to review appeals, and gave  
 386 decisions which satisfied the people. He was economical in food and clothes. One of the house of Hashim related an anecdote, saying, “ I was with al-Muhtadi one night during Ramadhan, and I rose to go, but he told me to sit down, so I sat down till al-Muhtadi prayed the Sunset Prayer with us, then he ordered food to be brought. A wicker tray was brought, with two loaves on it, a salt cellar and vinegar jar. Then he ate, and I ate a little, thinking as I did that he would produce some better food than that. When he saw me eating thus, he said, “ Are you not fasting ? ” I replied, “ Of course.” He went on, “ Do you not intend to fast to-morrow ? ” I answered, “ How not, when it is the month of Ramadhan ? ” Then he said, “ Eat, and finish your dinner, for there is nothing here but what you see.” I was surprised and said, “ Why so, Commander of the Faithful, when God has been  
 (180) prodigal to you of his gifts, and abundant with his plenty ? ” Then he replied, “ It is as you say, praise be to God, but I do not want there to be amongst the house of Umayyah one like ‘Umar, son of ‘Abd al ‘Aziz, and there not to be his like amongst the house of al-‘Abbas.” al-Muhtadi had already expelled all playthings ; he forbade song and wine and restrained his friends from tyranny and wrongdoing. In the reign of al-Muhtadi, the leader

<sup>1</sup> Lit., ‘driven’ as of captured herds.

of the Zanj revolted. If God Most High will, an account of him will follow, in the reign of al-Mu'tamid. al-Muhtadi had killed one of his freedmen, so that the Turks were enraged at him. They rose, took him prisoner and  
837 tortured him in order to make him abdicate voluntarily. But he did not do so, so they deposed him and he died. That was in the year 256. An account of the state of the ministry in his time. When the oath of acknowledgement was taken to him as Caliph, he confirmed Ja'far, son of Mahmud al-Askafi, in his office as minister, then he deposed him, and appointed as minister Sulaiman, son of Wahb. The ministry for al-Muhtadi of Sulaiman, son of Wahb son of Sa'id. They came from a village in the Province of Wasit. It was (too) remoté for them. They were Christians then became Muslims, and served in the offices, till they reached the positions they did reach. Abu Ayyub Sulaiman, son of Wahb, was one of the world's (best) clerks, and the most excellent of them, the best educated, the best compiler of memoranda and registers, one of the best scholars on earth and the soundest of them in judgment. His son 'Ubaidullah related an anecdote, saying, "My father spoke to me and said, "The beginning of my good fortune was that, as a young man, I was served under Muhammad, son of Yazdad, the minister of al-Mamun. A number of us young men served under him, and, when he went in the evening to his house, one of us in turn would sleep at the palace of al-Mamun, to deal with any important business that might befall during the night." He continued, "It was the night of my turn, when a servant came out and said, "Is any of those acting for Muhammad, son of Yazdad, here?" The chamberlain replied, "Yes, here he is." So he took me into al-Mamun, who said to me, "Make  
838 a draft containing such and such, leave a wide spacing between its lines and bring it to me for correction as I may wish." He went on, "So I went out quickly, wrote the letter without making a draft, faired it, and brought it to him. When he saw me, he said, "Have you written the draft?" I answered, "No, I have written the letter."

He said, "Have you faired it?" I replied, "Yes." Then he kept on looking at me as though surprised at me. (181) Then when he read it, his approval showed in his face, and he looked up at me, saying, "How good is what you have written, my lad, but I want to put this line forward and to put that one back," and he wrote on both of them with his pen. So I took the letter and went out. I sat on one side, then I erased the two lines, did what he wanted and brought him the letter. He thought that I had discarded it and written another. When he read it, he did not recognise the place of the erasion, and he approved it, saying, "My lad, I do not know which pleases me the more, the excellence of your erasion or the quickness of your intelligence ; your caligraphy, or your speed. We are lucky to have you?" Then I kissed his hand and went out. That was the start of my advancement." al-Mamun, whenever an important event befell, always said, "Bring Sulaiman, son of Wahb." When this event befell him, a poet wrote to him :

"Your father laid on you a far off objective, as of old  
Wahb, son of Hasan, laid on him,

You will not be praised if you achieve its utmost limit,  
nor will you be excused if preceded thither, so  
falter not !"

339 They say that Sulaiman, son of Wahb, dearly loved Ibrahim, son of Maimun, who dearly loved a singer, named Khilas. All of them met together to drink, and Ibrahim became drunk. Then Sulaiman, son of Wahb, bent over to kiss him and 'love' him, Khilas watching him. When Ibrahim recovered, Khilas informed him what Sulaiman had done to him, saying to him, "How can my heart be true to you, when such as this is done to you?" So Ibrahim avoided and was angry with Sulaiman, who then wrote to him :

"Say to him whose lovers hope for no deliverance,  
Is it because I kissed you secretly and Khilas saw me,  
That you shun me, and ill report and humiliation  
come to me ?

That has gladdened men who have forged lies against us,  
 And greedy talebearers have helped them do us harm,  
 But come ! retaliate on me, since (the legal penalty)  
 for wounds is retaliation."

Ahmad, the son of al-Mudabbir, related an anecdote, saying, "We were in al-Wathiq's prison, I, Suliaman, son of Wahb, and Ahmad, son of Isra'il; they were trying to extract money from us. One day, Sulaiman, son of Wahb, said to me, "I dreamt as though a man said to me, 'Al-Wathiq will die after a month.' Then  
 340  
 (182) Ahmad, son of Isra'il, asked God's help, saying to him, 'Indeed you will not stop till you shed our blood,' and he was much afraid lest this conversation be reported of us." The son of al-Mudabbir continued, "Then I counted thirty days from that day, and, when the thirty days were up, Ahmad, son of Isra'il said to me, 'Where is the proof of the statement and the verification of the dream, for the date has already come full reckoning and we know nothing.' Then Sulaiman, son of Wahb, said to him, "Visions both tell the truth and lie." But when it was the next evening, our door was violently knocked, and a crier cried out, "Good news, good news ! al-Wathiq is dead, so come out if you wish." Then Ahmad, son of Isra'il, laughed and said, "Arise, for the vision has been proven true, and deliverance has come." But Sulaiman, son of Wahb, said, 'How can we go on foot, when our home is far off, but we will send for animals to ride to be brought for us.' Then Ahmad, son of Isra'il, was angry, and greatly annoyed, for he was cross tempered. He said to him, 'Blast you, Sulaiman, will you wait for your horse to be brought, till another Caliph succeeds', and someone says to him, 'There are a number of clerks in prison,' and he replies, 'They shall be left as they are till we look into their affairs,' then we shall tarry in the prisons longer than this, and the reason for that will be your proceeding to your home riding, you. . . .' Then we laughed and went out walking in

the night. Our thoughts agreed that we should hide  
 341 with one of our friends till the news was confirmed, and,  
 indeed, we saw on our road two men, of whom one said  
 to the other, 'The new Caliph was informed of the affairs  
 of these clerks in prison and of the criminals', but he said,  
 "Let not one of them be released till I look into his  
 case'. So we remained in hiding till God Most High,  
 to Whom is the Praise, was gracious in a little while."  
 From his poetry (is this):

"The chances of Fortune have taught me, and the well  
 taught one takes heed,  
 I have tasted sweet and I have tasted bitter, such are  
 the changes of a lad's life,  
 There has been no grief nor pleasure but I have had  
 of both a share."

The house of Wabhb was among the most important,  
 shrewd, eminent and generous of the people. Their  
 regime was brilliant, and their period enlightened. In  
 their time letters stood in high regard, and deeds of  
 charity were in clear evidence. al-Muhtadi was deposed  
 while he was minister. The period of al-Muhtadi billah  
 (188) and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled al-Mu'tamid,  
 —the father of al-'Abbas Ahmad, the son of Mutawakkil,  
 to whom the oath of acknowledgement as Caliph was  
 taken in the year 256. al-Mu'tamid was a weakling.  
 His brother al-Muwaffaq Talhah an Nasir was in control  
 of his affairs. The reign of Mu'tamid was a reign sur-  
 342 prising in character, for he and his brother al-Muwaffaq  
 Talhah were like two partners in the Caliphate. al-  
 Mu'tamid's name appeared in the sermon, and on the  
 coinage, and his was the title Commander of the Faithful,  
 but his brother Talhah issued orders and prohibitions,  
 led the army, fought with enemies, protected the frontiers,  
 and appointed ministers and generals, to do which al-  
 Mu'tamid was too occupied with pleasure. In that  
 reign fell the battles with the leader of the Zanj. An  
 account of the case of the leader of the Zanj, his genealogy,  
 and what happened about him. In those days appeared

a man called 'Ali, son of Muhammad, son of Ahmad, son of 'Isa, son of Zaid, son of 'Ali, son of al-Husain, son of 'Ali, son of Abu Talib, but his genealogy is not correct according to the genealogists. They regard him as a false claimant but, as for his circumstances, he was an eminent man, a clever speaker, eloquent, and intelligent. He won the hearts of the Zanj slaves in al-Basrah and its neighbourhood, and of them there gathered to him a great number, together with other people besides. He became important, and his power grew great, though, at the outset, he was insignificant, possessing no more than three swords,—so much so that when a horse was given, he had neither bit nor saddle with which to ride it, so that he rode it on a halter. Wars and expeditions befell him in which he was victorious, and by reason of which he prospered, and his circumstances and booty became considerable. His black soldiers spread over the countryside of 'Iraq, Bahrain and Hajar. al-Muwaffaq Talhah 348 attacked him with numerous troops, and they met between al-Basrah and Wasit. War continued between the two of them for many years. They built cities there, and each of the two sides stood on guard against each other. Finally, the 'Abbasid army was victorious, and they annihilated them by killing and taking prisoner. The leader of Zanj was killed and his city, which he had built and named al-Mukhtaran, looted. His head was carried to Baghdad, and that was a famous day. It is said that the number of slain in those battles was a million and a half men. al-Mu'tamid died in the year 279. An (184) account of the ministry in his reign. It has already been stated that his brother, al-Muwaffaq, was in control of the Caliph, and he used to depose and appoint the ministers. The ministry for al-Mu'tamid of Abu'l Hasan 'Ubaidullah, son of Yayya, son of Khaqan. When al-Mu'tamid succeeded to the Caliphate, opinions agreed on 'Ubaidullah (etc.). He was summoned and appointed minister despite violent dislike and endeavour to avoid and escape (it) on his part. 'Udaiddullah was experienced in the affairs of subjects and of governors, also a competent

financier. Mention of him has preceded in the Caliphate of al-Mutawakkil. The ministry for al-Mu'tamid of al-Hasan, son of Mukhlid, who was appointed minister when 'Ubaidullah, son of Yahya, died. al-Mu'tamid appointed al-Hasan, son of Mukhlid, who was secretary to his brother, al-Muwaffaq, so that he combined the duties of minister to al-Mu'tamid and of secretary to al-Muwaffaq. al-Hasan, son of Mukhlid, was from Dair

344 Qunna. It is said his father was a ferryman, but his son 'had the career he did have.' al-Hasan was one of the (best) clerks in the world. They said that he had a small note book which he used to 'keep' in his hand, and in which were the principal items of the revenue of the realm and of its imports, with their dates, and that he did not go to sleep all night till he had read it and verified its contents, so that, if he were asked on the morrow about anything, he could answer from memory without looking up or referring to the ledgers. al-Hasan, son of Mukhlid, said, "I was once in attendance on al-Muwaffaq, son of al-Mutawakkil, and I saw him touching his robe with his hand. He said to me, "Hasan, I like this robe, how many of them have we in the stores?" So I brought out from my boot on the spot the ledger which contained in detail the totals of the furniture and robes in the stores, and I found therein that the total of that kind of robe was six thousand. Then he said to me, 'Hasan, we are naked, write to the country to make thirty thousand robes of its kind and to bring them as quickly as possible'." Then al-Mu'tamid deposed him and made minister Sulaiman, son of Wahb, of whose case a short description has preceded. From that time began the rise to power of the house of Wahb. The ministry of Abu's Saqr, Isma'il, son of Bulbul, whom al-Muwaffaq appointed as

345 minister to his brother al-Mu'tamid. Abu-s Saqr was generous, hospitable, and of good manners. He attained a notable rank in the ministry and combined charge of both military and civil affairs. He also looked closely

(185) into the administration of the troops, and he was called the thanked minister. In his youth his conduct had been



unbecoming, but he attained the rank to which he did attain. Poets, such as al-Buhtari, Ibn ar-Rumi, and others praised him, and lampooned him. Abu's Saqr laid claim to descent from the house of Shaiban, and I have seen his genealogical tree traced back to Shaiban, in the hand-writing of one of the genealogists. People raised their eyebrows at him and said that he claimed falsely. Ibn ar-Rumi praised him in the long poem rhyming in N, which begins :

“Branches and sand dunes, in which are various kinds  
of apples and pomegranates, have produced for  
you the (fruit of their) union,  
Willow branches on which are always fruit, though  
fruit is not what the willow bears.”

People called this poem the melon house because of the numerous fruits mentioned in it, and the passage in which the fruits follow in succession is the melon house. From this poem (this passage) :

“They said, ‘Abu's Saqr is of Shaiban.’ I replied to them, ‘No, by my life, but Shaiban derives from him,  
‘How many a father has increased his honour through his son, as ‘Adnan is ennobled through the Prophet of God?’”

When Abu's Saqr heard him saying, “They said, ‘Abu's  
340 Saqr is of Shaiban.’ I replied to them, ‘No . . . .’” he thought that Ibn ar-Rumi was secretly lampooning him by this and that he was hinting that he falsely claimed descent. The affair was confused to Abu's Saqr, his idea was confirmed and he turned away from him. Ibn ar-Rumi tried all means to make him understand the true state of affairs, but he would not accept anything anyone said about it. It was said to him, “Good Heavens! But look at the second verse and its compliment, the like of which has been paid to no man before you.” But he did not listen, and made sure that Ibn ar-Rumi had lampooned him, so he gave him nothing. Then Ibn

ar-Rumi did lampoon him and used indecent language in his lampooning of him. In his lampoon on him he said this :

“ Men marvelled at Abu's Saqr, when he assumed charge  
of the office after being a wage slave,  
There is some chemistry in luck when it touches a  
dog and forms him into a man.”

Also he said :

“ Gently, Abu's Saqr, for how many a bird falls prone  
after soaring ?  
You have wed Felicity, though you are not her (social)  
equal,—may God save her from divorce !  
Unholy are the trousers of Felicity you put on, how  
many a pilgrimage contains a Manichaen ! ”

(186) One of his extraordinary remarks in it, was :

“ Why should a chick whose father was a miserable  
nightingale be called son of a Falcon, folk of the  
offices ?

They gave him a name which suits him ill, he is  
dubbed Son of a Falcon who is born of birds of  
prey.”

347 al-Mu'tamid seized him, imprisoned him and tortured him, then executed him in his prison, and confiscated his wealth. Know that these ministers of al-Mu'tamid, such as al-Hasan, son of Mukhlid, Sulaiman of Wahb, and Abu's Saqr, son of Bulbul, were appointed as ministers and deposed several times, twice or thrice. The ministry of Ahmad, son of Salih, son of Shairazad al-Qatrabili, for al-Mu'tamid. Al-Muwaffaq appointed him as minister for his brother al-Mu'tamid. Ahmad was an excellent clerk, versed in all the knowledge such a one as he should have, a good composer of both verse and prose. Ahmad described a woman writer, saying, “ (It is) as though her handwriting were the beauty of her figure, her ink the blackness of her hair, her parchment the skin of her face, her pen one of her fingers, her exposition the witchery of

her eyes, her penknife the roguery of her glance, and her cutting block<sup>1</sup> her lover's heart." Ahmad, son of Shaizar, remained as minister about a month, then sickened and died. That was in the year 266. The ministry for al-Mu'tamid of 'Ubaidullah, son of Sulaiman, son of Wahb. 'Ubaiduallah, son of Sulaiman, was one of the greatest ministers, and principal secretaries. He excelled in his profession, was shrewd, skilled, intelligent and  
 848 noble. A slave girl of al-Mu'tamid whom he loved died, and he grieved for her, so 'Ubaidullah, son of Sualiman, said to him, "To such as you, Commander of The Faithful, misfortune is of little account, for you will easily find something in exchange for anything lost, but no one will find anything in exchange for you. It is as though the poet intended you when he said :

"He weeps for us, but we do not weep for anyone, for we are rougher than the pelt<sup>2</sup> of camels."

Of 'Ubaidullah, son of Sulaiman, the poet said :

"When Abu Qasim's hand is generous to us, the two generous ones are not praised,—the sea and the rain,—

If his opinion or the edge of his resolution pass by, the two cutting things lag behind,—the sword and Destiny,—

If the light of his blaze shines on us, eclipsed are the two fires,—the sun and the moon,—

He who has not spent a night dreading the intensity of his assault, does not know the two causes of disquiet,—fear and dread,—

(187)

By thought he attains what his eyes do not perceive, and the two witnesses against him are sight and repute."

'Ubaidullah died in the year 288. The period of al-Mu'tamid and his ministers ended, then after him, reigned al-Mu'tadid, his brother's son, Abu'l 'Abbas Ahmad,

<sup>1</sup> i.e., for trimming the pen.

<sup>2</sup> So Derenbourg's text. The Cairo edition of 1921 has 'livers.'

son of al-Muwaffaq, son of al-Mutawakkil. The oath of acknowledgement to him as Caliph was taken in the year 279. al-Mu'tadid was energetic, sensible and eminent. His conduct was praised. When he succeeded the world was in ruins, and the frontiers left unguarded. He did his duties satisfactorily, till his realm became populous, wealth increased, and the frontiers were put in order. He was a strong administrator, violent against evildoers, putting an end to the wronging of the subjects by the licence of the soldiery, kind to his nephews of the house of Abu Talib. His reign was one of numerous schisms and revolts, amongst them that of 'Amr, son of al-Laith the coppersmith, whose power had grown great and importance became considerable. He had acquired control of the greater part of Persia, and he used to say, "If I wished to throw a bridge of gold across the river Balkh I would do so." His kitchen used to be carried on six hundred camels, but he ended up in chains, a prisoner and disgraced. al-Mu'tadid set himself to mend the divisions in his kingdom, and to do justice to his subjects, so much so that when he died there were in the Treasuries ten million dinars (the thousand twice repeated). He died in the year 289. An account of the ministry in his reign. He confirmed 'Ubaidullah, son of Suliaman, in his ministry, a short account of whom has already been given. When 'Ubaidullah died, al-Mu'tadid determined to extirpate his children and to confiscate their wealth. So he summoned al-Qasim, son of 'Ubaidullah, and asked help for the privy purse of al-Mu'tadid. He wrote a bond for a million dinars. Then al-Mu'tadid appointed him as minister. The ministry of al-Qasim, son of 'Ubaidullah, son of Sulaiman, of Wahb. al-Qasim, son of Sulaiman, was one of the world's shrewdest men, and one of the most eminent ministers. He was energetic, eminent, intelligent, self instructed, generous, awe inspiring, and tyrannical. His religious beliefs were criticised. It was he who killed by poison Ibn ar-Rumi. Ibn ar-Rumi was entirely occupied with praising them, but they used to give him less than his due at times, then he lampooned

them severely. On the house of Wahb, Ibn al-Mu'tazz said :

- (188) "To the family of Sulaiman, son of Wahb, I owe benefits, and kindness long ago,  
They made fortune subject to me after it had been refractory, and from the clothes of my father they washed away the blood."

Lamprooning them, a poet said :

- "When you see the house of Wahb in office you do not know which of them is female and which male,  
Their women's shirts are slit before, and their men's shirts slit behind !"

al-Mu'tadid died whilst he was minister. The period of al-Mu'tadid and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled his son al-Muktafi billah, Abu Muhammad 'Ali, son of al-Mutadid. The oath of allegiance was taken to him as Caliph in the year 289. al-Muktafi was one of the best Caliphs. It was he who built the Congregational Mosque in ar-Rahbah in Baghdad. In the reign of al-Muktafi appeared the Qarmatians, who were folk of the Khawarij. They revolted, cut the pilgrims' way, tried to exterminate them, and killed a great number of them. al-Muktafi despatched many armies against them, attacked them, and killed some of their leaders. It was al-Muktafi who built 'the Crown' in the riverain palace in Baghdad. al-Muktafi died in the year 295. An account of the state of the ministry in his reign. When al-Mutamid died, al-Muktafi was in ar-Raqqah, so the minister, al-Qasim, son of 'Ubaidullah, made satisfactory arrangements to have the oath of allegiance taken to al-Muktafi, wrote to inform him of that, and sent to him the mantle and the staff. Then al-Muktafi came to Baghdad and confirmed him in the ministry, giving him a title. al-Qasim's position grew great in al-Muktafi's reign, and his power strong. When death overtook him, he recommended to al-Muktafi al-'Abbas, son of al-Hasan, so he appointed him minister. The ministry of al-'Abbas,

son of al Hasan. as-Suli said, "The most marvellous change of fortune and alteration of circumstances that  
 352 I have seen was that I saw al-'Abbas, son of al-Hasan, early on Wednesday, before the minister al-Qasim, son of 'Ubaidullah, died. He had come to his<sup>1</sup> door and  
 (189) kissed his son's hand. Then at the close of the said day, al-Qasim died, al-Muktafi invested al-'Abbas, son of al-Hasan, and made him minister. Then the son of the minister al-Qasim, son of 'Ubaidullah, came and kissed his<sup>2</sup> hand. al-'Abbas, son of al-Hasan, was shrewd, cunning and well read, but weak at accountancy, nor was his conduct praiseworthy. He was entirely addicted to pleasure and affairs were neglected. He used to say hto his deputies in the Provinces, "I send official letters to you, but do you act for the best." In his time affairs continued to fall into confusion, till al-Husain, son of Hamadan, and a company of the troops attacked him and killed him. That was in the reign of al-Muqtadir. The period of al-Muktafi and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled al-Muqtadir billah, Abu'l Fadhl Ja'far, son of al-Mu'tadid. The oath of allegiance to him as Caliph was taken in the year 295, when he was thirteen years old. al-Muqtadir was energetic, generous and spendthrift. He brought back the Caliphate's pomp, lavish disbursements, pensions, numerous robes of honour and presents. In his palace were eleven thousand Byzantine and Slav eunuchs. In his reign the jewel treasury was full of precious jewels amongst them the hyacinth  
 353 stone, which ar-Rashid bought for 300,000 dinars; the unique pearl, of which the weight was three mithqals, and other precious jewels besides these. He dissipated them all, and exhausted them in a very short space of time. In his reign al-Hallaj was executed. An account of that event. al-Hallaj, whose name was al-Husain, son of Mansur, and nickname Abu'l Ghaith, was a Persian. He grew up in Wasit, or, as some say, in Tustar, and mixed with the mystics. He was a pupil of Sahl of Tustar. Then he proceeded to Baghdad and met Abu'l Qism

<sup>1</sup> i.e., al Qasim's.<sup>2</sup> al-'Abbas'.

al-Junaïdi. al-Hallaj was of disordered mind. Sometimes he would wear the wool (of the mystic) and the hair shirt (of the ascetic), at others the dyed garments (of the reveller); now a great turban and a woollen shift, now a sleeved shirt and soldiers' kit. He wandered about the countryside, and, finally, came to Baghdad, where he built a house. The views and beliefs of the people about him differed. He showed a disordered mind and changed from one theological school to another. He sought to deceive the people by tricks which he performed deliberately; for example, he used to dig holes on the camber of the roads and place jars of water in them. Then he would dig holes elsewhere and put food in them. Later he would pass by those places in the company of his followers, so that they might need water there to drink, or with which to perform ablution. Then he would come to that place where he had dug a hole, he would prod it with the ferrule of his staff and the water would gush forth, so that they drank and performed ablution. Then he would do similarly in another place when they were hungry, and bring forth food from inside the earth. He made them suppose that these were saint-like miracles. He used to do similarly with fruits which he stored, kept, and brought forth out of their season. The people loved him, and he spoke the language of the mystics, which he used to confuse with that of which mention is not, 'strictly speaking,' permissible. He wrote poetry, from which (I quote):

"To my beloved no whit of injustice can be ascribed,  
 He has given me a draught to drink like that which  
     he drinks, as does a host to a guest,  
 When he cup comes round, he calls for the executioner's mat and the sword,  
 Such is he who drinks old wine with the dragon in  
     summer time."

The love of the people for him and their inclination to him grew great, so much so that the common folk sought to use his urine as medicine. He used to say to his friends, "You are Musa, 'Isa, Muhammad and Adam. Their

souls have migrated into you." But when this ill doing of his grew, al-Muqtadir ordered his minister Hamid, son of al-'Abbas, to summon him and examine him. So the minister summoned him, and the judges and religious leaders met for that purpose. He was examined, and he confessed to things which made his execution necessary, so he was flogged with a thousand lashes with the intention that he should die, but he did not die, then his hands and legs were cut off and he was beheaded. His corpse was burned. He said to his friends at his execution,

355 "Let not this frighten you, for I shall return to you after a month." They said that he quoted before his execution:

"I sought a resting place in every land, but I did not see a resting place for myself in (any) land,  
I followed my desires and they enslaved me, had I been contented I had been free."

That was in the year 309. His grave is in Baghdad on the western bank, near the shrine of Ma'ruf al-Karkhi. In those days the Qarmatians tore out the black stone, which remained in their hands for more than twenty years, till it was returned by hand of the noble Yahya, 'tenth in descent' from Abu Talib. Know that al-Muqtadir's

(191) reign was one of much disorder, on account of his youth and the control exercised over him by his mother, his women and his servants, so that his administration altered its instructions on the orders of women and servants, while he was occupied in pleasure. In his reign the world fell into ruins, the treasuries were emptied, and different sects arose. He was deposed, then reinstated, then put to death. In his reign arose the Fatimid empire

356 in the West. An account of the state of the 'Alid empire, its start and its end, in summary form. This empire spread far the wings of its rule, and its extent was long. Its start was when the Mahdi appeared in the West in the year 296, and its end was in the year 567. This empire almost attained universal recognition of its rule, and the submission of all nations to itself. To it alluded ar-Rida al-Musa,—may God sanctify his soul,—when he said :



"Why should I stay in disgrace when I have a cutting  
 tongue and a proud nose,  
 And pride soars with me (far away) from oppression,  
 as swerves the wild bird?  
 Shall I endure oppression in the land of my enemies,  
 when in Egypt is an 'Alid Caliph,  
 Whose father is my father and whose patron my  
 patron, if a far distant one injures me.  
 My blood is linked to his blood, to the lords of all  
 mankind, Muhammad and 'Ali,  
 In that clime, my shame were honour, and in that  
 spring camp my violent thirst were drink to  
 satisfaction."

An account of the start of the empire. The first of their  
 Caliphs was al-Mahdi billah. He was father of Mu-  
 hammad, 'Ubaidullah, 'sixth in descent' from Ja'far  
 as-Sadiq. His genealogy has also been transmitted in a  
 857 different form, and about it there is much disagreement,  
 but the truth is that they were 'directly' descended from  
 'Ali and Isma'il. This form (of their genealogy) which  
 I have recorded here is the one most generally accepted  
 and the one to which the principal genealogists subscribe.  
 al-Mahdi was one of the foremost men of the house of  
 Hashim in his time. It is said that he was born in Baghdad  
 in the year 266. It is also said that he was born in  
 Salamiyah, then that he went to Egypt in the guise of a  
 merchant, that his cause came into the open in the west,  
 that he summoned the people to follow himself, that they  
 rallied to him, that large numbers followed him and greeted  
 him as Caliph. His strength grew powerful and his  
 importance became great. Then he left for the country  
 of Qairawan, built the city named al-Mahdiyyah, where  
 he dwelt, and ruled Ifriqiyah, the land of the west and all  
 192 those parts. Then he ruled Alexandria, and received its  
 taxes and the taxes of part of Upper Egypt. He died in  
 the year 322, then one after another received the Caliphate  
 in succession to him, till the succession ended with al-  
 'Adid,—the last of their Caliphs,—Muhammad Abdullah,

son of the Amir, Yusuf, son of al-Hafiz lidin Allah. An account of its end. al-'Adid was crowned in the year 555, as a baby. The Amirs and ministers took control of his realm, until the Lion of the Faith, Shirkuh, the uncle of  
 558 Salah ad-Din Yusuf, son of Ayyub, went to Egypt, when the disorders in the affairs of the realm became evident, as well as the youth of the Caliph and the disunity in views of his ministers and generals. Salah ad-Din went unwillingly with his uncle, the Lion of the Faith, Shirkuh, who did not last long, but died. Then Salah ad-Din succeeded to control of the kingdom, and al-'Adid appointed him minister and invested him with the robe of that office in the year 564. Salah ad-Din had authority over the realm, put his family over it, and allocated to them valuable fiefs, weakening the hands of the friends of al-'Adid. He had sole authority. al-'Adid became sick, and his illnesses lasted a long time, then he died in the year 567, and the people avoided mention of any one as Caliph in the prayer from the pulpit, but, when it was Friday, a Persian mounted the pulpit, gave the sermon, and mentioned al-Mustadhi as Caliph, no one saying him nay, and the position in Egypt continued with mention of the 'Abbasids in the sermon, and the empire of the Fatimids over it finished. Salah ad-Din Yusuf, son of Ayyub, had sole power over Egypt without a rival. He imprisoned those of al-'Adid's relatives who opposed, and seized the stores and treasuries, included in which was the mountain of jacinth, of which the weight was sixteen mithqals. Ibnu'l Athir, the historian, said, "I myself saw it and weighed it." Included in them too,  
 359 was the handle of emerald, of four fingers' length, and in breadth a knuckle joint. They found a drum near al-'Adid's place, thought it was made for play and mocked al-'Adid. Then a man beat and farted. Then another beat and the same thing happened to him as happened to his companion. Then everyone who beat it farted, then one of them dropped it from his hand and it broke. The drum had been made for the colic, and they regretted its breaking. That was in the reign of al-Mustadhi, of

the house of al-Abbas. The good news of the conquest of Egypt and of his mention in the Friday sermon there (193) was brought to him, joy was manifested in Baghdad, and the poets congratulated him. al-Mustadhi sent to invest Salah ad-Din as Sultan with full civil and judicial powers. Praise be to Him, Who gives the power to whom He wills and takes the power from whom He wills. We return to complete the Caliphate of al-Muqtadir. al-Muqtadir was deposed, and the oath of allegiance was taken to 'Abdullah, son of al-Mutazz. He lasted one day as Caliph, then al-Muqtadir overcame him, seized him and killed him. 'Abdullah, son of al-Mutazz is not accounted one of the Caliphs on account of the short time of his rule. Antagonism occurred between al-Muqtadir and Munis the Conqueror, the Commander in Chief, leading to a war in which al-Muqtadir was killed. His head was cut off and brought before Munis the Conqueror. His corpse remained thrown on the camber of a road, and it is said that a gatherer of thorns passed 360 by it, and saw its private parts displayed, so he threw over it a bundle of thorns with which he covered them up. That was in the year 320. An account of the state of the ministry in his reign. When al-Muqtadir sat on the throne of the Caliphate, he confirmed al-'Abbas, son of al-Hasan, the minister of his brother al-Muktafi, in his office. When al-'Abbas, son of al-Hasan was killed, the civil strife occurred between al-Muqtadir and 'Abdullah, son of al-Mu'tazz, and al-Muqtadir won, he summoned Ibn al-Furat and made him minster. The ministry of Ibn al-Furat. as-Suli said that they came from Sarifin in the Tigris Provinces. He said, "The house of al-Furat was the best of the people in eminence, generosity, nobility, integrity, and virtue. This, the father of al-Hasan, 'Ali, son of al-Furat, was the noblest, the most generous and the most chartiable of men. His days were like festivals for the people. al-Muqtadir (when the civil strife occurred resulting in his deposition and the taking of oath of allegiance to Ibn al-Mu'tazz, then, later, to the overcoming of him by al-Muqtadir, and the confirmation of the

Caliphate to the latter), sent to the father of al-Hasan, 'Ali, son of al-Furat, summoned him, appointed him as minister, and invested him. He managed to abate the civil strife, and put the realm in order in a single day. He confirmed the laws and won over the people. He did not go to sleep that night ere matters were established  
 381 in al-Muqtadir's favour, and the affairs of his realm straightened out. On that a poet of al-Muqtadir's realms said:

(194) "In an hour you put in order a realm which, had it not been for you would have been upset for months."

Ibn al-Furat held office three times for al-Muqtadir. They say that, when Ibn al-Furat was in office as minister, the prices of candles, ice and paper rose, on account of his great use of them, for no one, whoever he might be, drank in his house in the seasons anything but iced water, and no one went out from his home after sunset without a large candle of the purest wax before him, whether he was a man of no importance or important; also there was in his house a room known as the paper room. Whoever went in, needing some paper, took what he wanted from it. It is related of him that he said: "I have not seen any one of those in need, but that my desire to benefit him has been greater than his desire." He also said, "Before he assumed office, cushions used to be placed for those who sat with him and his boon companions, on which they reclined. (After being made minister), he ordered cushions to be brought, saying,  
 382 'God shall not see me exalting my position by lowering that of my friends'." When the civil strife over Ibn al-Mu'tazz occurred, and al-Muqtadir won, he appointed as minister Abu'l Hasan, son of al-Furat, to whom were brought letters from a number of the principal men of the realm, mentioning their partiality for Ibn al-Mu'tazz, and their desertion of al-Muqtadir. Some of those present advised him to open them and read them, so that he might know enemies from friends. But Ibn al-Furat ordered a brazier containing fire to be brought, and, when it was brought, he put these letters in it, in the presence

of the people, without reading any of them. He said to those present, "These are letters from the principal men of the realm; if we read them our sentiments towards them and their sentiments towards us will change. Then, if we punish them, we shall destroy the best in the state, which would be the uttermost disservice to the realm, and, if we do nothing to them, we shall leave them with altered sentiments likewise, so we shall be unable to make use of them." Ibn al-Furat continued in and out of office as minister for three times, then he was seized and executed. That was in the year 322. The ministry of al-Khaqani,—abu 'Ali Muhammad, son of 'Ubaidullah, son of Yahya, son of Khaqan. When al-Muqtadir seized 'Ali, son of al-Furat, for the first time, he summoned him, but he was afraid of Ibn al-Furat, so he put his mind at ease and made him minister, investing him with the robe of that office. al-Khaqani was of bad conduct and a poor administrator, always making and cancelling appointments. It is said that, on a single day, he appointed nineteen inspectors for al-Kufah, taking a bribe from each one of them. They went down one after the other till all of them met on a certain road, and said, "What shall we do?" So one of them replied, "If you want to do the right thing, the last of us to have an agreement with the minister should be the one to go down to al-Kufah, for he is the one whose appointment is in order, because he has no successor." So they agreed to do that, and the man who came last proceeded towards al-Kufah, while the remainder went back to the minister, who then distributed them to a number of Provinces. The poets lampooned him, and amongst the things said of him was:

"Since you were appointed there has been groaning in the offices, and a long sickness has befallen the revenue,

Poor judgment and weak understanding confront emergencies when they are dealt with by you,  
If you grow fat through chicanery and tyranny,  
true eminence has a fine drawn physique."

Another of the things said of him was :

“ The minister tires not of folly, he appoints and cancels  
an hour later,

He brings near the man whose cash is quick to come,  
and drives far away him who seeks favour by  
intercession,

The corrupt come to him, and the most favoured of  
the people are those of them most prodigal with  
their goods.”

- 364 al-Muqtadir seized him and imprisoned him, then appointed as minister 'Ali, son of 'Isa, son of al-Jarah. The ministry for al-Muqtadir of 'Ali, son of 'Isa. 'Ali, son of 'Isa, was one of the principal secretaries, eminent, religious, pious, ascetic and abstinent. as-Suli said, “ I do not know of any minister to the house of al-'Abbas who resembled 'Ali, son of 'Isa, in his ascetism, probity, knowledge of the Koran, understanding of its inner meaning, caligraphy, accountancy, almsgiving and charity. They say that the annual income from his estates of 'Ali, son of 'Isa, was above 80,000 dinars, of which he spent half on the poor and needy and half on himself, his family and his friends. He worked hard at the ministry, put in order the offices and the Provinces, and established the laws. His period was the best period of the ministry. They say that no criticism was made of 'Ali, son of 'Isa, more serious than their remark that he devoted too much attention to administrative detail, so that he was often too preoccupied to deal with major issues. When he took office as minister, his almsgiving and charity spread far afield. He made many trusts of the royal estates, and created for them a special office named the office of charities. He appropriated its revenue to the defence of the frontiers,
- (196) and to the two noble sacred cities. He used to sit for the redress of grievances from morn to eve, and restrict himself to the minimum of food and to the coarsest clothes. He held the office of minister to al-Muqtadir several
- 365 times, for he and Abu'l Hasan 'Ali, the son of al-Furat, used to take the ministry in turn, now this one, now that,

The ministry of Hamid, son of al-Abbas. Hamid used to have charge of the provinces of the Sawad, and he had no experience of the provinces of the Capital. He was generous, very generous, formal, kept considerable state, was self controlled, full of virtue, cruel in extracting money, lacking in perseverance, quick to violence and anger, but these his generosity used to conceal. It is related of him that he once entered al-Muqtadir's palace, and one of the Caliph's particular friends asked him for barley for his animals. So he took 'pen' and wrote an order for him for six hundred ass loads. Then another of the intimate friends said to him, "I, too, want fodder for my beasts." So he wrote an order for him for six hundred ass loads, and one after another of the Caliph's particular friends kept on asking him, and he writing orders, till he had distributed six thousand ass loads in a single hour. When al-Muqtadir realised the small extent of Hamid's understanding and his little experience of ministerial affairs, he brought out 'Ali, son of 'Isa, son of al-Jarah, to him from the prison, and associated him with him, making him as it were the deputy to him, so that 'Ali, son of 'Isa, was, on account of his experience, the real source (of power). Everything that he ratified was ratified, and everything that he cancelled was cancelled. Hamid had the title of minister, but 'Ali, son of 'Isa, the reality, so much so that a poet said :

- 306      " Say to the son of 'Isa a word that will please the son  
               of a ' crusader,'  
               You are the minister, and they only mock the beard  
               of Hamid.  
               They have put him with you as a cover, to correct the  
               deed of a man acting ill,  
               Whenever you complain, just say to him ' How much  
               make one plus one ? ' "

Hamid used to wear the black robe of office and to sit on the minister's cushion, while 'Ali, son of 'Isa, used to serve him as a deputy. He wore no black clothes, nor

had any of the outward garb of the minister, yet he was the minister in reality, so that a poet said :

“ The most astonishing thing that we have seen is that  
there should be two ministers in a land,  
This one in black is not the minister and that minister  
is not in black.”

(197) Then Hamid was dismissed, and al-Muqtadir, after him, appointed 'Ali, son of al-Furat, as minister, handing the former over to the latter, who executed him in secret. The ministry of Abu'l Qasim 'Ubaidullah, son of Muhammad, son of 'Ubaidullah, son of Yahya, son of Khaqan. He did not last long, nor was his conduct worth mention or record. His affairs were mismanaged ; so he was fined and dismissed. Then he died in the year 312. The ministry for al-Muqtadir of Abu'l 'Abbas Ahmad, son of 'Ubaidullah, son of Ahmad, son of al-Khasib. He was of sound learning and good understanding, a calligraphist and eloquent. He was mentioned for his excellent anecdotes and poems. The reason for his appointment to office was something remarkable. He,—the said Abu'l 'Abbas,—used to treat the friends of al-Muqtadir well, show his affection for them and make them gifts. It happened that a disturbance occurred in one of the districts, so al-Muqtadir equipped an army and sent it with one of his generals to that district. al-Muqtadir then anxiously awaited news of this army, so the son of al-Khasib sent birds<sup>1</sup> with one of his trusted friends with the army, telling his friend to despatch them daily, with hourly reports on them. So the reports on the birds used to come back to Ahmad, son of 'Ubaidullah, son of al-Khasib, and he presented them to al-Muqtadir hourly, so that nothing of the affairs of the army escaped him. al-Muqtadir marvelled at that, and said : “Whence does Ahmad, son of al-Khasib, receive information about this army ?” The matter was explained to him, and it was said to him, “How great would the work and endeavour as minister be of a man whose zeal reaches

<sup>1</sup> i.e., carrier pigeons.



so far in a matter which concerns him not at all!" So he appointed him as minister. They say that 'this' 388 Abu'l 'Abbas was an upright man,—who kept his hands off both state and private property,—averse from trickery, and a man of his word. Then his position worsened, and the lady mother of al-Muqtadir was estranged from him. He had been her secretary before appointment as minister.

Then he was dismissed and his wealth confiscated. That was in the year 314. The ministry for al-Muqtadir of Abu 'Ali Muhammad, son of 'Ali, son of Muqlah. He was a famous calligraphist, concerning whose calligraphy proverbs were made. He was the first to produce this writing, and to change it from the Kufic style to this style. After him, Ibn al-Bawab followed it. Initially, he had a subordinate position in one of the offices, at six dinars a month. Then he became attached to Abu 'lHasan, the son of al-Furat, (198) with whom he became intimate. The son of al-Furat was like the sea, generous and charitable. He promoted him, and exalted his rank. He stayed with him, putting before him letters from the people on important matters. He profited in this way, and the son of al-Furat ordered him to collect a commission 'for doing this,' and appropriate it to his own use. He continued to do so until his position improved, and his wealth became great. When the son of al-Furat was appointed minister for the second time, Ibn Muqlah was confirmed in his 'employ,' his circumstances improved and his renown spread widely. Then Satan excited discord between him and Abu'l Hasan 'Ali, son of al-Furat, and each of them became estranged from his friend. Ibn Muqlah became forgetful of the beneficence of Ibn al-Furat, and entered the number of 389 his foes and his detractors, till Ibn al-Furat was disgraced. But when Ibn al-Furat was reappointed minister, he seized him and fined him 100,000 dinars, which his wife paid for him, for she had considerable means. Ibn Muqlah was a calligraphist and stylist, and the art of his despatches was never criticised. He wrote poems, too, from which (I quote) :

"The age has tested me with its changes, but I have never fallen behind in the changing,  
I have been used to both its (kinds of) days, and how often does a thing to which one is not used become one's use?"

Abu 'Abdullah Ahmad, sone of Isma'il, known as Zanjī, secretary to Ibn al-Furat, said, "When Ibn Muqlah was arrested and imprisoned, I did not go to him in his prison, nor write to him, nor commiserate with him, though between me and him existed affection and friendship, for fear of Ibn al-Furat. When his trial was prolonged he wrote to me a letter in which was :

"Think you that the letters of friends are prohibited between them, or, tell me, has paper become dear? But why have you not asked me how I am, when such disgrace has overwhelmed me?"

Your friend is he who cares for you in every mischance, you will see everyone cares for you in time of ease,

Grant that you were my foe and not my friend, I have seen foe pity foe."

370 One of his poems was that written to his son who was ill:

"May your Lord bring you recovery and health, and guard you at my expense from the blows of Fate, I bethought me of your illness when my cup was in my hand, and I mixed it with my tears instead of water."

From his poems also :

"I was not demeaned when Fate bit me, nor proud when it treated me well,

(198) I am as fire in the throat of the envious, as flowing water with my friends."

al-Muqtadir made him minister and invested him with the robe of that office in the year 16. He was in sole charge of the duties of the ministerial office, positively and negatively, in which he expended a sum amounting

to 500,000. Then he was dismissed and arrested, later reinstated, and circumstances kept on changing with him till ar-Radi appointed him minister. Then events occurred which made it necessary for ar-Radi to imprison him in his house. He fell on lean times and his foes told ar-Radi stories against him, and made him<sup>2</sup> afraid of his<sup>1</sup> deceit. Then he<sup>1</sup> amputated his<sup>2</sup> right hand, and he remained in prison for a while with his hand amputated. He used to bemoan his hand, saying, "Hand, with which you have written such and such copies of the sacred volume, such and such traditions of the Prophet, and official despatches to the east of the earth and to the west, you have been  
 371 amputated as are amputated the hands of thieves!" From his poems, alluding to the amputation of his hand :

"I was not tired of life, but I trusted their oaths, and  
 my right hand has gone,  
 Then I did the best I could to guard their lives, but  
 they guarded not me,  
 After (the loss of) my right hand, I have no pleasure  
 in life. Life, my right hand has gone, so go you,  
 too !"

On that a poet said :

"They amputated one of his hands, fearing his pens,  
 not sharp swords,  
 But they did not amputate (his) good sense ; when-  
 ever he used it I saw destruction between the  
 larynx and the throat."

When ar-Radi amputated the hand of Ibn Muqlah, he wrote with his left just as he used to write with his right. Then he tied a pen on to his right stump and wrote with it, and there was no difference in his handwriting before its amputation and afterwards. A marvellous coincidence was that he held the ministerial office three times, made three journeys and was buried three times, once in the palace of the Caliph when he was executed there,—that was a short while after the amputation of his hand,—then

<sup>1</sup> The Caliph.    <sup>2</sup> The minister

his family asked that he be handed over to them, so he was dug up and handed over to them ; finally his wife asked for him, so she dug him up and buried him in her house. The ministry for al-Muqtadir of Abu'l Qasim

273 Sulaiman, son of al-Hasan, son of Mukhlid. His conduct was worthy neither of mention nor record. He was not intelligent and only reached the position he did reach through luck and good fortune. It is said that he went

(200) in once to al-Qasim, son of 'Ubaidullah, minister to al-Mu'tadid and to al-Muktafi, and the minister welcomed him, kissed him on his face, and treated him with extraordinary honour for one in his position. The minister was then asked the reason for that, and he replied, " In a dream I had, I saw as though I had a cap on my head, which this one took and put on his head. Without doubt this lad will attain ministerial office," and it was as he said. His conduct in his period of office was not praised. When al-Muqtadir dismissed Ibn Muqlah, he had consulted 'Ali, son of 'Isa, son of al-Jarrah, as to whom he should appoint as minister, and he advised him (to appoint) this one ; so he appointed him in the year 318, then arrested him and appointed al-Kaludhani. The ministry for al-Muqtadir of Abu'l Qasim 'Ubaidullah, son of Muhammad al-Kaludhani. His period (of office) was not long, he was unable to implement his wishes, and fines were numerous in his time. The army rioted against him, cursed him and stoned him while he was in a boat. Thereafter he swore he would not enter the ministry, and he secluded himself in his house, locking the door. His period of office lasted for the space of two months. The ministry for al-Muqtadir of al-Husain, son of al-Qasim,

378 son of 'Ubaidullah, son of Sulaiman, son of Wahn. He used to be called Abu'l Jamal, and it was said that he was the best known man to be minister. He was minister to al-Muqtadir, his father al-Qasim minister to al-Mu'tadid and al-Muktafi, his grandfather 'Ubaidullah minister to al-Mu'tadid, and his great grandfather Sulaiman, son of Wahn, minister to al-Muhtadi. On this a poet said to him:

“ Minister, son of a minister, son of a minister, son  
of a minister

Strung like pearls when arranged around (girls’  
throats.”

al-Husain, son of al-Qasim, did not excel in his profession, nor was his conduct in office the subject of thanks. It was not long before he became unequal (to it) and circumstances became too difficult for him. ‘Ubaidullah, son of ‘Abdullah, son of Tahir, praised him when he said :

“ If I make you a present of my verses, ’tis to the son  
of a house to which verses are given as presents,  
Apart from the fact that I see you to belong to a house  
of which no member is blackened by disgrace.”

(201) Jahazah lampooned him, saying :

“ When the minister is Abu Jamal, and the inspector  
of the town al-Daniyali,

Leave the town, for, shortly, you will see the days  
becoming nights,

The gaiety of the world is finished, and has turned  
its back, and proclaim that everything is on the go.”

374 When his shortcomings and incompetence became apparent to al-Muqtadir, he dismissed him, arrested him and fined him. He survived till the time of ar-Radi and went far away from al-’Iraq. But when Ibn Muqlah became minister he ordered his execution and sent someone to him who beheaded him. His head was brought to the Caliph’s palace in a basket, and the basket was put in the store, that being their custom in such things. It is recorded that when the civil strife in Baghdad befell in the reign of al-Muttaqi, a basket was brought out from the store in which were an amputated hand and an amputated head. On the hand was stuck a label on which was written, “ This hand was the hand of Abu ‘Ali, son of Muqlah, and this head the head of al-Husain, son of al-Qasim, and this hand was that which wrote the order for the cutting off of this head. The people marvelled at that.

The ministry of Abu'l Fadl Ja'far, son of al-Furat. His tenure of office was not long, nor was his conduct worthy of record. al-Muqtadir was killed while he was minister, and he hid. The period of al-Muqtadir and his ministers ended, then, after him, reigned his brother, al-Qahir, Abu Mansur Muhammad, son of al-Mu'tadid, to whom the oath of allegiance was taken in the year 320. He was awe inspiring, forward to shed blood, violent, acquisitive, and a bad administrator. He fined a number of the mothers of al-Muqtadir's children, also al-Muqtadir's mother, whom <sup>375</sup> he suspended by one foot, upside down, and tortured with severe forms of beating and humiliation. He extracted from her 130,000 dinars. She survived a few days thereafter and died of grief for her children, and of her sufferings from the torture. al-Qahir was deposed in the year 322, the reason for which was that his minister, Ibn Muqlah, had hidden through fear of him, and used to inspire the troops against him, wean them from him and encourage them to attack him and depose him. They blinded him so that his two eyes hung down on his cheeks. Then he was imprisoned in the Caliph's palace. He remained <sup>(202)</sup> in the prison for a while, then was brought out thence in a change of circumstances. He was sometimes imprisoned and sometimes released. Then one day, he went out and stood at the cathedral mosque of al-Mansur, soliciting alms from the people, seeking thereby to form a party against al-Mustakfi. One of the house of Hashim saw him, stopped him doing that and gave him five hundred dirhams. There did not occur in his reign notable events worth record. An account of the state of the ministry in his reign. He appointed as minister Ibn Muqlah, his brother's minister, and it was his second tenure of office. A short account of his biography has already preceded, and there is no need to repeat it. Then he appointed as minister Muhammad, son of al-Qasim, son of 'Abdullah, son of Sulaiman, son of Wabb. He was unable to hold down the office, his tenure of which was not long. Then he<sup>1</sup> arrested him<sup>2</sup> and disgraced him.

<sup>1</sup> The Caliph. <sup>2</sup> The minister.

- 376 It chanced that he fell ill of colic and died after that. The period of al-Qahir and his ministers ended. In those days the Buwayhid regime rose to power. An account of the circumstances of the Buwayhid regime, its start and its end. Their genealogical tree is referred to Buwayh, one by one, back to the kings of Persia, till it reaches Yahudh, son of Yaq'ub, son of Ishaq, son of Ibrahim, the Friend (of God), and so to Adam, the father of mankind. They were not from al-Dailam, they were only called Dailamites because they lived in the Dailam country. As for its start,—it was a regime which rose from that which men held to be of no account, nor was one of them held in consideration by anyone. Yet it subjugated communities, humiliated the world, controlled the Caliphate, deposed and appointed Caliphs, made and unmade ministers, and the affairs of the lands of Persia and al-'Iraq followed their orders. By common consent the chief men of the empire obeyed them, and all this after narrowness of means, poverty, humiliation, indigence and the hurts of want and oppression. Their grandfather was Abu Shuja' Buwayh, whose father and grandfather were just poor plebeians in the Dailam country. Buwayh was a fisherman, and Mu'izz ad-Daulah, after conquering the country, used to confess the blessings of God Most High, and say, "I used to carry firewood on my head." The account of the start of their regime was related by Shahryar,
- 377 son of Rustum of Dailam, who said, "Abu Shuja' Buwayh was initially a friend of mine. One day, I went in to him after the death of his wife, the mother of his three sons, who ruled the country,—'Imad ad-Daulah, Abu'l Hasan
- (208) 'Ali ; Rukn ad-Daulah, Abu 'Ali al-Hasan ; and Mu'izz ad-Daulah, Abu'l Husain Ahmad. The grief of Abu Shuja' Buwayh for his wife was violent. I condoled with him, and his distress quietened. I took him away to my home, gave him food, and brought his three sons to him. While they were at my house a person passed by the door saying, "The astrologer, the wizard, the interpreter of dreams, the writer of charms and talismans! " Then Abu Shuja' Buwayh called and said to him, "Yesterday

I dreamt a dream, so interpret it to me. I dreamt as though I were urinating, and from my penis emerged a great fire which became high and lofty till it almost reached the sky. Then it divided and forked into three. From those forks were generated a number of forks and the world grew light from those flames." Then the astrologer said, "This is an important dream, I will not interpret it save for a robe of honour and a horse." Buwayh replied to him, "Indeed, I only possess the clothes on my body. If I give you them I shall remain naked." 378 The astrologer answered, "Well, ten dinars." Buwayh replied, "In truth, I have not two, so how ten?" Then he gave him a little something, and the astrologer said, "Know that you will have three sons who will rule the earth and those on it, and their renown will rise to the horizons, as rose that fire. To them will be born a number of kings in the same number as the dividing forks which you saw." Then Buwayh said to him, "Are you not ashamed to mock us? I am a poor oppressed man, and my sons are these poor humble men,—what have they to do with a kingdom?" The astrologer answered him, "Then tell me the time of birth of your sons, one by one." Buwayh told him that, and he began to look at his astrolabe and astrological tables." Finally, the astrologer got up, kissed the hand of 'Imad ad-Daulah Abu'l Hasan 'Ali, and said, "This one indeed will rule the land, then will rule this one after him,"—and he took the hand of his brother, Abu 'Ali al-Hasan. But Abu Shuja' was angry with him, and said to his sons, "Slap him, for he has gone too far in mocking us." So they slapped him and we were laughing at him. Then the astrologer said, "No harm in this if you recall this circumstance in my favour, when you are in power." Abu Shuja' gave him ten dirhams and he went away. As for the rise of the sons of Abu 379 Shuja', they enlisted and joined the army. They continued in various capacities to serve the Persian kings, from one thing to another, till the rank of 'Imad ad Daulah became high. Then he became governor of al-Karkh, in charge of which Mardawij put him. Then from



that he was transferred to other offices till he ruled a part of the Persian Provinces. His kingdom grew till he wrote to the Caliph ar-Radi, asking him to give him the Persian provinces in fief, on condition that, annually, after defraying the normal expenses, he should transmit to the Caliph's palace eight million dirhams, and that the Caliph should send him the investiture of a Sultan and the diploma. So ar-Radi sent him those by hand of a messenger whom he sent to him, and whom he instructed not to hand over the robe and diploma to him till he had received the money from him. But when the messenger came to him, he tricked him, took from him the robe which he wore, and the diploma, which he read before important witnesses. He was emboldened by that, promised the messenger the money, but put him off for a while. Then the messenger died whilst with him, and the Caliph's interests were damaged. He suspended payment and ruled absolutely. 'Imad ad Daulah was the first of their kings. After him they ruled one after another till their power ended. As for its finish, towards the end, their power weakened, and its weakness continued to increase till the succession brought to the throne 'Izz ad-Daulah, son of Jalal ad-Daulah, father of Tahir, between whom and Kalijar occurred campaigns resulting in the flight of the former. He settled in Shiraz, and died in the year 441. With him ended their power. Then, after al-Qahir, reigned his brother's son, ar-Radi billah, Abu'l Abbas Ahmad, son of al-Muqtadir, son of al-Mu'tadid. The oath of allegiance was taken to him in the year 322. He was a poet, eloquent and intelligent, the last of the Caliphs in (many) things, amongst them he was the last Caliph whose poems were collected, the last to exercise independent rule, the last to preach the Friday sermon from the pulpit, the last to sit with boon companions and to whom the learned came, and the last whose offices, gifts, servants and chamberlains followed the precedents of the former Caliphs. In his reign, in the year 322, Mardawij came to importance in Isphahan. He was a rebel in those parts, and it was said that he

wanted to take Baghdad and transfer the authority to Persia, nullifying the empire of the Arabs. In the reign of ar-Radi came the news that the servants of Mardawij had conspired against him and killed him. In the reign of ar-Radi Abu'l Hasan 'Ali, son of Buwayh, rose to power.

381 In the reign of ar-Radi the rule of the 'Abbasid Caliphs weakened, Persia was in the hands of 'Ali, son of Buwayh; ar-Rayy, Isphahan and the mountain country in the hands of his brother, al-Hasan, son of Buwayh; al-Mosul, (205) Diyar Bakr, Diyar Rabi'ah and Madar, in the hands of the Hamdanids; Egypt and Syria in the hands of Muhammad, son of Tughj, later in those of the Fatimids; al-Andalus in the hands of 'Abdu' r-Rahman, son of Muhammad the Umayyad, and Khurasan and the eastern country in the hands of Nasr, son of Ahmad the Samanid. ar-Radi died in the year 329. An account of the ministry

in his reign. The first of his ministers was Abu 'Ali, son of Muqlah. This was the third of the periods of office of Ibn Muqlah, for which he expended 500,000 dinars so that ar-Radi should appoint him. Then the army rioted, and civil strife ensued necessitating his dismissal. So ar-Radi dismissed him, and appointed 'Abdu' r-Rahman, son of 'Isa, son of Da'ud, son of al-Jarah. There has already been given a sufficient account of Ibn Muqlah. The ministry of 'Abdu' r-Rahman, son of 'Isa, son of al-Jarah. When 'Ali, son of Muqlah, was

382 arrested, he summoned 'Ali, son of 'Isa, son of al-Jarah, and wanted to appoint him minister, but he refused and held back, pretending inability. So he asked his advice as to whom he should appoint, and he recommended his brother 'Abdu' r-Rahman, son of 'Isa. Then he summoned him and invested him as minister. He mounted, with the escort in front of him, then his tenure of office did not last long, his affairs fell into disorder, and he sought to be excused the office of minister. Then he was arrested and his biography is not worth record. The ministry for ar-Radi billah of Abu Ja'far Muhammad, son of al-Qasim al-Karkhi. When ar-Radi arrested 'Abdu' r-Rahman, son of 'Isa, he made Abu Ja'far

Muhammad, son of al-Qasim al-Karkhi, minister, who was a very short man, extremely short, so that they had to cut the legs of the Caliph's throne by four fingers' length in order that the minister al-Karkhi might be able to advise the Caliph. The people drew a bad omen from that, saying that it portended the end of the dynasty, and events turned out as they said. Affairs fell into disorder, matters became confused for him and he hid. They said that when he wanted to hide, he took off the lid of a large earthenware pot and sat therein. The pot was taken out as though it were but a pot while he was inside it. He continued in hiding till he was brought into the open and fined, then he escaped. The ministry  
383 for ar-Radi billah of Sulaiman, son of al-Hasan, son of Mukhlid. When al-Karkhi was unequal to shouldering the burden of the ministry and hid, ar-Radi billah summoned Sulaiman (etc.) and appointed him minister. He  
(206) invested him with the robe of the ministry, then he proved incompetent to administer affairs, because the Military controlled the state, so, when ar-Radi saw the incompetence of his minister Sualiman, he sent to Ibn Ra'iq, who was the senior general, cajoled him, handed affairs over to him, and gave him the rank of generalissimo. He imposed on him the duty of administering the realm, and he put the generals under his command, so that they became one unit. They came before the Caliph and he made them sit in the minister's place. Ibn Ra'iq, the generalissimo, had sole charge of affairs, appointed inspectors and governors, official correspondence was put up to him, and orders in all matters were referred to him for review. There remained to the minister nothing but the title, without (power to) issue orders or to administer. From that time the 'Abbasid Caliphate was ill treated ; affairs passed from its control ; foreigners, generals and the Military controlled the empire, collected the taxes, tied the hands of the Caliph, and allotted to him a little something and the bare means of subsistence. From that day the status of the Caliphate weakened. The ministry for ar-Radi billah of Abu'l Fath al-Fadl, son of Ja'far, son of

al-Furat. When the generalissimo Ibn Ra'iq took control of affairs, he advised ar-Radi billah to appoint as minister al-Fadl thinking that he would obtain money from him.

384 So he presented him to ar-Radi who invested him as minister. Abu'l Hasan, son of Thabit, son of Sinan told an anecdote, on the authority of Abu'l Hasan 'Ali, son of Hisham, saying, "When al-Fadl (etc.) was invested as minister, I met Ibn Muqlah who had been dismissed and was hiding. I said to him, "It is wrong of you, my lord, to delay visiting this minister to congratulate him on his appointment." He replied, "I mistrust him and have no need of his company." Then I said, "You should write him a letter to excuse your delay and to send such congratulations to him, as will take the place of congratulations in person." He replied, "I fear that he may answer me inviting me to attend in person," and he quoted to me of his composition :

"She who told you to leave alone this new minister has missed the mark,

I said to her, "May gladness never pass you by, but your remark was not correct,

Will, in the case of one like me, his self obey him (if told) to be seen a humble suppliant?"

(207) He was a rash and forward man, noble souled, ambitious, he served in various capacities and his circumstances changed between hardship and ease, being fined and dismissed till his fearlessness, strength of spirit and great ambition brought him to the pitch of raising an army and running the risk of dangers. Then he conquered the  
385 Princes of Khurasan and al-Basrah, and ar-Radi appointed him minister then dismissed him, and invested as minister Sulaiman, of whom mention has already been made, to repeat which is unnecessary. He was the last of his ministers. The period of ar-Radi billah and his ministers ended, then after him, reigned his brother al-Muttaqi billah Abu Ishaq Ibrahim, son of Muqtadir billah, to whom the oath of acknowledgement was taken in the year 329. His biography is not worth record, his affairs

became confused, and one of the generals from the Dailam country, called Tuzun, obtained control of him. Then al-Muttaqi fled with his son and family to al-Mosul, fearing for his personal safety in the struggle in Baghdad. In those days befell struggles and civil strife, the Caliph's palace was looted and its contents seized. Then Tuzun wrote to al-Muttaqi to win him back, and swore the most emphatic oaths that, so far as he was concerned, no harm should befall him. al-Muttaqi was taken in by that, went down from al-Mosul to Baghdad and reached as-Sindiya on 'Isa's canal. Tuzun and all the people went out to meet him. When Tuzun saw him he kissed the ground, but he had already secretly warned a number of his followers to surround him and take him into his tent. Then he was seized, his eyes put out, deposed, and the oath of acknowledgement was taken to al-Mustakfi. al-Muttaqi died in the year 350. An account of the state of the ministry in his reign. He confirmed Sulaiman in his office for four months, then he appointed Abu'l Khair Ahmad, son of Muhammad, son of Maimun, but he only had the title of minister, and his biography is not worth record. Then events befell leading to his arrest and to his dismissal. The ministry for al-Muttaqi of Abu 'Abdullah al-Baridi. An account has already preceded of his attaining power, of his strength of mind and of his connection with the army. Then, in the reign of al-Muttaqi, he came to Baghdad, accompanied by a numerous following. al-Muttaqi displayed delight at (seeing) him and appointed him minister despite his unwillingness. Messages passed between him and al-Muttaqi which led to his frightening him and alarming him, so he brought 50,000 dinars. Struggles befell between al-Baridi and the generals of the army, so they looted his house and he fled to Wasit. He held the title of minister for less than a month. The ministry, for al-Muttaqi, of Abu Ishaq Muhammad, son of Ibrahim al-Askafi, known as al-Qarariti. His tenure was not long, for he remained in office the space of forty days. The cause of his holding office as minister was that one day

he came to the audience chamber of the generalissimo, who was fining some of the clerks and treating them roughly, but they were concealing their property from him. So al-Qārarīti went aside with one of the generalissimo's followers and said to him, "If the general makes me minister, I will undertake twice this for him, and collect wealth for him without having need of this torture." So Tuzun made him minister after two days, then after a few days arrested him and appointed al-Karkhi, whose tenure also did not last long, for he remained in it about fifty days. The second ministry of al-Baridī. al-Muttaqī appointed him minister and wrote to him to come up to Baghdad. So he came up from Wasit, then he made him minister, and he remained in office less than a month. No criticism was made of him, but struggles occurred between him and al-Muttaqī for those days were days of civil strife. When al-Baridī was appointed minister Abu'l Faraj al-Isfahani, the composer of the Book of Songs, lampooned him, in a long poem beginning:

"Heavens, fall! Earth, quake! Ibn al-Baridī has become minister

People! How hot my breast, my lament and my raging thirst! How tormented my heart!

When the army on a Friday went with al-Baridī in his black official clothes

Given to him by the Imam, by choice and in reliance on one who is unreliable

A vest of honour that divests honour, and a flag which in furling unfurls the furling knot."

The ministry for al-Muttaqī of Abu'l Husain 'Alī, son of Abu 'Alī Muhammad, son of Muqlah. Al-Muttaqī appointed him but his tenure did not last long. al-Muttaqī was deposed while he was minister. The period of al-Muttaqī and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled Abu'l Qasim 'Abdullah al-Mustakfi, son of al-Muktafi, son of al-Mu'tadid. The oath of acknowledgment was taken to him in the year 333 and news was brought to him of the arrival of Mu'izz ad-Daulah, son

of Buwayh. He was much afraid and the people were confused. al-Muktafi gave Mu'izz ad-Daulah presents of nice things and fruits. Mu'izz ad-Daulah came to the Caliph's capital, and he appointed him generalissimo, giving him the collar, the bracelet and the insignia of the Sultan. He presented him with a standard and he was the first king of the house of Buwayh in the Caliph's capital, being entitled Mu'izz ad-Daulah, and his other brother was entitled 'Imad ad-Daulah. He ordered that their titles should be stamped on dinars and dirhams. The Dailamites were billeted in the houses of the folk of Baghdad, a thing not previously known. Then one day Mu'izz ad-Daulah rode to the Caliph's palace, greeted al-Muktafi and kissed the ground before him. al-Mustakfi ordered a chair to be placed on which Mu'izz ad-Daulah sat. Then two men of Dailam, with the connivance of Mu'izz ad-Daulah, advanced to al-Mustakfi and stretched out their hands towards him. al-Mustakfi thought that they wanted to kiss his hand, so stretched out his hand. Both of them pulled it and overturned him from the throne, put his turban round his neck and dragged him along. Mu'izz ad-Daulah got up, the trumpets and drums sounded, the people were confused, and the Dailamites entered the Caliph's private quarters. al-Mustakfi was taken to the house of Mu'izz ad-Daulah where he was bound. He was deposed from the Caliphate, his palace was looted and his eyes put out. He remained in the Sultan's house in bonds till he died in the year 338. An account of the state of the ministry in his time. The first of his ministers was as-Samari Abu'l Faraj Muhammad, son of 'Ali. He had no legal nor independent authority and his tenure of office was not long. He was arrested and a poet lampooned him, saying :—

“ Now if the poor man hides his goods they say you are an infidel, so fear the punishment by fire,  
 Shall my foot be my mount, and my boot my blood  
 she camel, despite the humiliation and disgrace  
 thereof, when the (man of) Surra man ra'a has

in his stable two hundred brisk, picked steeds of blood?

An ass has a donkey for his horse, but a clever clerk lacks the hire of an ass,

I am bewildered, so tell me you whether this is justice on the part of fate."

Then the affairs of the Caliphate became confused and its glory did not remain nor that of the ministry. The Buwayhids ruled and the ministry was in their hands. They disposed of the Provinces and fixed for the Caliphs a pittance for their expenses. The period of al-Mustakfi and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled al-Muti' billah (210) Abu'l Qasim al-Fadl, son of al-Muqtadir, to whom the oath was taken in the year 334. His position was weak. In his reign the black stone was returned to its place. The Kharijite Qarmatians had taken it, then they returned it, saying, "We took it by order and we have returned it by order." al-Muti' was much afflicted by paralysis, and he was tongue-tied. Subkutakin, the chamberlain of Mu'izz ad-Daulah, went in to him and invited him to abdicate and to have the oath of acknowledgement taken to his son at-Ta'i', so he did this, confirming his son's authority and abdicating himself. He died in the year 364, then, after him, ruled his son 'Abdullah the Generous, (391) Abu Bakr at-Ta'i' li'amr Allah, to whom the oath was taken in the year 363. at-Ta'i' had great physical strength. One day a mountain ram grew to full strength in his garden, and no one dared to approach it. So at-Ta'i' went out to it, and the ram charged at him, but he stood his ground before it till he could get his hands on its horns. Then he summoned a carpenter and told him to cut off its horns with a saw. So the carpenter sawed them off and there they were in at-Ta'i's hands. In his reign the power of the house of Buwayh became great. 'Adad ad-Daulah came to Baghdad and the authority of the Buwayhids spread far. In the year 381 the Buwayhids seized at-Ta'i' and, after him, acknowledged al-Qadir. The reign of at-Ta'i' billah ended, then, after him, ruled



al-Qadir Abu'l 'Abbas Ahmad, son of Ishaq, son of al-Muqtadir, to whom the oath of acknowledgement was taken in the year 381. al-Qadir was one of the best of their Caliphs, well mannered and conducted, beneficent, religious, kind and righteous. He married the daughter of Baha ad-Daulah, son of 'Adad ad-Daulah, for a dowry amounting to 100,000 dinars. In his reign the prestige of the 'Abbasid dynasty returned, its glory increased, and it resumed a strong hold on its affairs. al-Qadir's tenure of the Caliphate lasted a long time. He died in the year 422. Then, after him, ruled his son Ja'far 'Abdullah al-Qaim bi amr Allah, to whom the oath was taken in the year 422. al-Qaim was one of the best and most upright of their Caliphs. His tenure of the Caliphate (211) lasted a long while, and through him the prestige of the dynasty increased. In his reign the power of the Buwayhids collapsed, while that of the house of Saljuk came into evidence. An account of the circumstances of the Saljuk power, its start and its end. The strength of this regime was great, and its empire wide. Its orders were executed in the very presence of the Caliph, over whom it obtained control. Its name was mentioned in the Friday Sermon from the pulpits, and the names of its Sultans were struck on the coinage. A record of the start of their affairs. They were a people who originated from the Turks of al-Khazar, and they used to serve the Turkish kings. Their grandfather Saljuk grew up, with striking marks of nobility on him, with proofs of evident leadership in his actions. The king of the Turks favoured him and made (212) an intimate of him, entitling him Shabashi, which, in their tongue, means leader of the army. Saljuk displayed the height of his ambition, and won men's hearts by his generosity and understanding. The chiefs followed him. It is said that the wife of the Turkish king said to her husband, "I suspect that Saljuk will get the better of you, and my view is that you should execute him, for the people's fondness for him has become great." Then he replied to her, "I will consider what I shall do in his case." But Saljuk had perceived something of that intention,

and the changed mood became apparent to him, so he collected his tribesmen and followers, bound them by an oath and brought in those who obeyed him. He became an important commander of the Ghuzz, and migrated with them from the country of the Turks to that of the Muslims. When he entered it he made a show of Islam so that the Muslims might help him, and put him in possession of pasture and dwelling places. He settled with his army and began to raid those nearest to him of the Turkish tribes. A tribute from that country adjacent to him had belonged to the Turkish king, but Saljuk refused it and expelled his agent. Saljuk died, aged a hundred, then his sons grew in strength, grace and power. They obtained control over every place in Persian territory which they found weak, and their position continued to increase till Tughrulbak,—the first of their  
394 sultans,—ruled a part of Persian territory. His position also continued to grow stronger till al-Basasiri conquered Baghdad, looted it, killed its inhabitants, evicted the Caliph al-Qaim and imprisoned him in the new fortress. The civil war of al-Basasiri was a serious affair, so at that time al-Qaim wrote to Tughrulbak the Sultan, inviting him to come to Baghdad to enable him to overcome al-Basasiri. Then Tughrulbak came with his soldiers to Baghdad, and, when al-Basasiri heard of that, his power collapsed. He left Baghdad, Tughrulbak entered Baghdad,  
(212) and restored the glory of the empire of the Caliphate. He was mentioned with the title of Sultan in the Friday sermon from the pulpits of Baghdad, and that was the start of their Sultanate in the Capital. As for its end, their affairs continued to weaken till they totally collapsed in the reign of an-Nasir. That was in the year 590, and God is Most High. al-Qaim died in the year 467. An account of the ministry in his reign. Fakhr ad-Daulah Abu Nasr Muhammad, son of Muhammad, son of Jahir, was his minister. The ministry of the son of Jahir. Fakhr ad-Daulah was one of the cleverest and most astute of men. At his start he was poor and destitute. Numerous chances favoured him, one of the first of which was that one day

he was sitting in al-Kharkh, and one of those washermen who wash clothes in the ruins passed by him. He had with him some old precious stones of which the lustre had faded. He bought them from him for three dinars, and polished up some of them. One of them turned out to be a ruby, another a magnificent turquoise. He had a gold signet ring made as a setting for each of them. Then various changes befell him till he went on an embassy to the emperor of Byzantium. He offered him the two rings, and he gave him 20,000 dinars for them. This was the origin of his wealth and fortune. Then he served in various capacities till he became attached to Ibn Marwan, the prince of Diyar Bakr. He served him for a while and accumulated great riches while with him. His ambitions rose to the ministry of the Caliph, so he sent secretly to al-Qaim, presented himself to his notice, and expended on him 30,000 dinars. al-Qaim sent one of his intimates in an embassy to Ibn Marwan. His intention in despatching that ambassador was that he should have a secret meeting with Fakhr ad-Daulah and ratify with him his intentions. Then, when the ambassador wished to return to Baghdad, Fakhr ad-Daulah went out as though to bid him goodbye, and went down with him to Baghdad. Before that he had already distributed his wealth in the country, and sent some of it to Baghdad. When the ambassador reached Baghdad in the company of Fakhr ad-Daulah, al-Qaim sent his friends to meet him and then invested him with the robe of the minister's office. Fakhr ad-Daulah performed the duties of that office well. The regions bordering al-'Iraq were disobedient to the Caliph, and their rulers were friends of Fakhr ad-Daulah. So he corresponded with them, sent them embassies and won them over so that they returned to their allegiance to the Caliph. Then Fakhr ad-Daulah was dismissed on account of some trouble which occurred between him and Nizam al-Mulk, the minister of the Sultan. Then Fakhr ad-Daulah was reinstated, and, when he was reinstated in his office, Ibnu'l Fadl the poet said in his praise :

"Truth has returned to its place, and you are worthy of it before (all) mankind  
You are like a sword a hand has drawn and then replaced it in its sheath."

When he was reinstated in office the people were extremely glad. It is said that a water carrier sacrificed an ox,—the only one he possessed,—in his honour, and gave its flesh away in alms. Then the minister presented him with a mule and its furniture, giving him with it some gold. When al-Qaim died, the minister Fakhr ad-Daulah made excellent arrangements for the taking of the oath of acknowledgment to al-Muqtadi, and he held office for two Caliphs, al-Qaim and al-Muqtadi, for the space of fifteen years and a month, after which he died, in the year 483. The ministry of the chief officer, 'Ali, son of al-Husain, son of Ahmad, son of Muhammad, son of 'Umar, son of al-Maslamah. He was minister to al-Qaim before Ibn Jahir, and because of him occurred the civil war with al-Basasiri. Before taking office as minister he was one of the assessors in Baghdad, and one of those who had knowledge of the canon law, and familiarity with learning and the recording of traditions. His importance grew and his position became great, but ill feeling occurred between him and al-Basasiri, Abu'l Harith, the Turk, who was one of the generals, and the matter finished with the flight of al-Basasiri. Then he collected a multitude and returned to Baghdad, which he conquered. Then he took Ibnu'l Maslamah, the chief officer, and mutilated him. One of the things he did to him was to imprison him, then he brought him out in bonds, with a woollen cloak and a red felt cap on him. Around his neck was a collar of leathern strips, like amulets. He made him mount an ass and perambulate the place on it. Behind him was a man beating him with a whip and calling attention to him, while the chief officer recited, "Say, 'God, Ruler of the kingdom, Thou givest the rule to whomsoever Thou wilt, and Thou takest away the rule from whomsoever Thou wilt'," and he displayed

him in the town. When he passed by al-Karkh, the people of al-Karkh threw old shoes at him and spat in his face. He was halted opposite the Caliph's palace on the western bank, then returned. A post had been erected for him at the Khurasan gate. He was dismounted from the ass, a freshly skinned ox hide was sewn on him, its  
 308 horns were put on his head, and he was suspended by a  
 (214) hook in his throat. He remained on the post alive till he died in due course. The period of al-Qaim bi amr Allah and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled his grandson, al-Muqtadir bi amr Allah, Abu'l Qasim, 'Abdullah, son of adh-Dhakhirah, son of al-Qaim, to whom the oath of allegiance was taken in the year 467. al-Muqtadir was highly ambitious, experienced in affairs, and one of the best of their Caliphs. An astonishing event chanced between him and the Sultan Malikshah, who had made for Baghdad which he reached in the year 485. Between him and al-Muqtadir was previous enmity, so Malikshah sent to al-Muqtadir, saying to him, "Leave Baghdad and dwell wherever you will." al-Muqtadir was disturbed at that and asked him to grant a respite of a month, but Malikshah said, "Not even a single hour." Messengers went to and fro between them, then the matter was settled by the intervention of Tajul Mulk Abu'l Ghanaim, the minister of Malikshah, on the basis that he granted a respite of ten days, and Malikshah said that he allowed (that). On the festival of the break-  
 309 ing of the fast, the Sultan prayed and went out to hunt. He was feverish and was cupped, then died in the middle of (the month) Shawwal. His wife Zubaidah Khatun took charge of the army after his death, and made an agreement with al-Muqtadir about her son Mahmud for the Sultanate, who was at that time only six years old. He was mentioned in the Friday sermon, and al-Muqtadi invested him. The army, Khatun, and her son Mahmud, the son of Malikshah, went to Isfahan, and God spared al-Muqtadi harm by Malikshah. al-Muqtadi died suddenly in the year 487. An account of the state of the ministry in his reign. When al-Muqtadi was acknow-

ledged Caliph he confirmed Fakhr ad-Daulah, son of Jahir, his father's minister, in his office. An account of his life has already been given, and no further mention is necessary. The ministry for al-Muqtadi of his son, 'Amid ad-Daulah Muhammad, son of Muhammad, son of Jahir. al-Qaim and al-Muqtadi both used to send him on embassies to the Sultans, which prospered in his hands. He was eminent and sound. Nizam a'l Mulk, the Sultan's minister, found him agreeable, and used to marvel at him, saying, "I wish I had a son like him." Then he married him to his daughter, and al-Muqtadi made him minister, entrusting affairs to him. Then he dismissed him, but Nizam a'l Mulk interceded for him, and he was reinstated. Ibn a'l Hubariyah the poet said of that, lampooning 'Amid ad-Daulah :

- (215) "Had it not been for Safiyyah, you had not been made minister a second time, so thank a free born woman through whom you have become our master the minister !"

Safiyyah was the daughter of Nizam a'l Mulk, whom 'Amid ad-Daulah married. Then 'Amid ad-Daulah and the foreign sultans fell out, and they asked the Caliph to dismiss him, the friends of the Caliph advising him to this effect. So he dismissed him and imprisoned him inside the palace of the Caliph. Then he was brought out dead and buried. He used to compose poetry, and (this) is from his poems :

"Till when will you keep on coming and going ? You want high things and the dowry of high things is dear,

Seeker of glory,—this side of glory is a battleground,  
in the coil of which lie danger to soul and wealth alike.

Time has its changes, but seldom does a man who lacks wealth attain to his desire."

The ministry for al-Muqtadi of Abu Shuja' Zahir ad din Muhammad, son of al-Husain al-Hamadhani. He was

a good and religious man, much addicted to good works, charity and alms. In his account of expenditure on items of charity and alms alone were debited sums to the value of 120,000 dinars. The clerk who compiled this account was one of ten clerks solely occupied with his charities. When the above mentioned Zahiru ad-din came to power,  
 401 Ibn al-Hariri, the author of the Maqamah, wrote to him:

“Congratulations on your honour, and may you be proud of your congratulations, just as you have already enjoyed a lofty place,

And you have been like your generous fathers, competent and satisfactory in the ministerial office, You shouldered its burden as a young man, just as John the Baptist was given authority as a youth.”

He used to pray the afternoon prayer, then sit judicially for the hearing of complaints till the time of evening prayer. The chamberlains used to call out to the people, “Whoever has any request let him produce it.” One of his good qualities was that, when the civil strife occurred between the Sunnites and the Shi’ah at al-Karkh and the Basrah gate in the City of Peace, he used every means to avoid spilling blood, so much so that al-Muqtadi said to him, “Affairs cannot proceed with the leniency used by you. You have encouraged the people by your clemency and indulgence. You must demolish the houses of ten of the principal citizens in the interests of good order, and to abate this civil discord.” So the minister sent to the inspector of weights and measures and said to him, “The Caliph has ordered the demolition of the houses of ten of the principal citizens, and I cannot gainsay him about them. But I do not feel sure that there may not be amongst them one who does not deserve punishment,  
 402 or who may not be the real owner of the property. So I want you to send your trustworthy men to this place to buy the properties of these suspects, and when the  
 (216) properties are mine then demolish them. Thus I shall be safe from sin, and also from the Caliph’s wrath. He paid him the price on the spot in cash, and the inspector

acted accordingly, then afterwards he sent and demolished them. He made the pilgrimage to the house of God Most High, and it is not recorded of any minister save this one that he made the pilgrimage during his period of office. For the ministers before him used to make the pilgrimage after they were freed from office, save the Barmakids who did the pilgrimage during their tenure of office. The Sultan Jalal ad-Daulah Malikshah asked al-Muqtadi to depose this minister, and al-Muqtadi issued the official letter of his dismissal in courteous terms, the like of which had not been used in dismissing a minister. He went away to his house, quoting:

“When you took that office you had no enemy, when you left it you had not a friend.”

Then he resigned and became an ascetic. He wore cotton clothes and proceeded on the pilgrimage. He stayed in the Prophet's city, used to sweep the Prophet's mosque, spread the mats and light the lamps, wearing rough canvas clothes. He began to learn the Koran  
408 by heart and finished it there. He composed elegant verses, from which are these words :

“Indeed he who disperses all he has collected is able to collect a family,

I do not despair even though the absence of (my) master is prolonged, for the end of absence is a meeting

And if the meeting follows separation, that meeting is the sweetest to the heart.”

He died in the year 513. The period of al-Muqtadi bi amr Allah and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled his son, al-Mustazhir billah Abu'l 'Abbas Ahmad, who was acknowledged Caliph in the year 587. al-Mustazhir was generous, bountiful, of good character, greatly ambitious, easy of approach, a cultivator of friendship, beloved for his beneficence, and a hater of oppression. In his reign the affair of the assassins became serious. They obtained control of castles and fortresses in Khurasan,



and the originator of their propaganda in Khurasan was al-Hasan, son of Sabbah, who came originally from Marv, journeyed to Egypt and there accepted doctrines from the propagandists of the house of Abu Talib. He was a shrewd man and a cunning one. Then he went back to Khurasan from Egypt, and became a propagandist for the house of Abu Talib. He used all sorts of means

404 till he became master of a castle in the Dailamite country, known as ar-Rudhabar. When he obtained control of it,

(217) his power grew and he led sections of the people astray. The sect of the assassins spread and grew, and a number of important men professed it in secret. Their power continued to increase till the Mongol army attacked their fortresses and did what it did. al-Mustazhir died in the year 512. An account of the state of the ministry in his time. In his reign the ministry lacked great prestige. One of his ministers was Za'im ar-Ra'usa, Abu'l Qasim 'Ali, son of Fakhr ad-Daulah, son of Jahir. His tenure of office was not long, nor was his biography worthy of record. After a short period in office he was dismissed and arrested. The ministry for al-Mustazhir of Abu'l Ma'ala Hibbatu Allah, sob of Muhammad, son of Mutallib. He was one of the most competent men of the 'Abbasid régime. al-Mustazhir appointed him minister after Za'im ar-Ra'usa, son of Jahir. Before his appointment to the ministry he used to serve in the Audit Department. One of his friends related an anecdote of him, saying, "One day before his appointment to the ministry I went in to him, when he was head of a department, and I saw him thinking, sunk in thought, so I asked him the reason, and he said, "For al-Mustazhir during the past year I did my utmost in reconstructing the country, organising increased production and augmenting the

405 revenue, and I said, "In this year 12,000 ass loads have been received, and in the year to come 20,000 ass loads will be received." His reply issued thanking me, and praising me, and he honoured me with a gift from his wardrobe : I was glad and said, "This is the fruit of my endeavour." Then my zeal for reconstruction was in-

creased and I put forth my utmost efforts to that end in the ensuing year. But it chanced that a dyke burst and much produce was ruined. Other things happened, too, resulting in a diminution of production leading to a reduction on the total received during the preceding year. So I wrote an official letter to the Caliph informing therein of the diminution of production, and I said to myself, "If he asks me the reason, I will explain to him." But his reply issued to me thanking me, and praising me, and he honoured me with a gift from his wardrobe as he had done in the preceding year. I said to myself, "Bad luck to him, this is how I stand with him in endeavour and failure, he has thanked me for both opposites, which proves that he does not reflect on what is said to him or done for him. Also who will guarantee me that one of my enemies who may be close to him may not suggest to him something which will be the cause of my destruction, and he will not consider the matter but will give orders agreeable to the enemy's intention?" The relator added,

408 (218) "So I said to him, God guard you and protect you from what you fear," and I did not go out till I had consoled him and assuaged his grief. This Abu'l Ma'ala, son of Mutallib, was one of the most learned, eminent and best ministers. The period of al-Mustazhir billah and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled his son al-Mustarshid Abu Munsadir al-Fadl, son of al-Mustazhir billah, who was acknowledged Caliph in the year 512. al-Mustarshid was an excellent man. When he was acknowledged Caliph, his brother, the Amir Abu'l Hasan, fled and hid himself. He went to al-Hillah seeking the protection of Dabis, son of Sidqah, the prince of al-Hillah, who was one of the most generous men in the world, who looked after his home and his friend, who protected those who should be protected and the frightened, and whose days were as feasts. In his time al-Hillah was the alighting place of caravans, the refuge of the hopeful, the bourne of the fugitive and the sanctuary of the fearful outcast. Dabis accorded him exceptional honour, gave him a house to himself and treated him with great gene-

rosity. He remained with him for a while in the most comfortable circumstances, but when his brother al-Mustarshid knew that he was with Dabis, he was frightened at that and became afraid lest something originate from him, so he sent the chief syndic, 'Ali, son of Tarad az-Zaini to al-Hillah with his seal and safe conduct and asked him to take the oath of allegiance from Dabis, and to ask him to hand over to him the Amir Abu'l Hasan. Dabis replied  
407 "As to the oath, I am entirely obedient to the order of the Commander of the Faithful," and he took the oath, "but as for handing over my protégé, no ! I will certainly not hand him over to you for he is my protégé and my guest, and I would rather be killed in his defence." The Amir Abu'l Hasan refused to proceed in the company of the syndic to his brother, so the syndic went alone. Then, later, al-Mustarshid got control of him and imprisoned him in one of his palaces in comfortable fashion. There befell estrangement between the Caliph al-Mustarshid and the Sultan Mas'ud, which became serious, and the matter finally led to war. The Caliph al-Mustarshid, accompanied by the army and notables of the empire proceeded, and Mas'ud made preparations to meet them. But when they met and the fight was joined, the army of al-Mustarshid was broken, and the Sultan Masu'd overcame them. His soldiers looted vast wealth from those of the Caliph, for it is said that the chests of coin were carried on 170 mules, and that it amounted to four million dinars ; also that the baggage was carried on five hundred camels, and that with it were ten thousand turbans, ten thousand 'shirts,' and ten thousand 'gowns,' all of which were of superb material and which he had promised as complimentary gifts should he conquer. It is said that the total value of the loot came to ten million dinars. Masu'd forbade the shedding of blood. He arrested the  
408 Caliph's friends and took them to a fortress. As for  
(219) the Caliph himself, he allotted a separate tent to him and put him in the charge of a number of men. Masu'd, together with the Caliph, went to Maraghah. Then a letter from the Sultan Sanjar came to Masu'd, ordering

him to treat the Caliph well, to return him to Baghdad with honour and respect, to repair his estate, to return his wealth to him, to give him a suite, herds and baggage greater than those he had lost, and to return him to Baghdad in the best condition. Masu'd carried out all that, made him a present of herds, litters, tents and loads of beautiful things, and it was determined to return to Baghdad. But some carelessness chanced on the part of Masu'd in charge of the army and a company of the assassins attacked al-Mustarshid and stabbed him with knives in his tent at a village 'near to' Maraghah. With him they killed a number of his friends. When Masu'd heard of that he mounted in alarm, showing his emotion, seized the people and executed them. Then al-Mustarshid was carried on the heads of the generals to Maraghah where he was buried, and where his grave is now known, beneath a beautiful cupola. I saw it on my visit to Maraghah in the year 697. As regards the killing of al-Mustarshid people disagree as to the reason for his being killed. Some say that Masu'd did not know about it and was displeased at it, others aver that it was Masu'd who suborned the assassins to kill him and gave them orders to that effect, because he feared him since he had the courage to collect a host and to take armies into the field, but he could not execute him openly, so he acted as he did in treating him well to all appearance, then killed him secretly. Finally, that he brought out a number of malefactors and executed them, giving the people to suppose that he had executed his murderers whom in fact he released by stealth. That was in the year 529. An account of the ministry in his reign. One of the best of his ministers was Abu 'Ali al-Hasan, son of 'Ali, son of Sidqah. He was excellent, experienced, versed in the principles of administration and good. al-Mustarshid appointed him minister in the year 523, and entitled him Jalal ad-Din, chief minister, best of the east and the west, helper of the Commander of the Faithful. He knew accountancy and the provinces of 'Iraq,' but he had no reputation for generosity. Then al-Mustarshid arrested

him and dismissed him from office. That was not through the wish of al-Mustarshid, but necessity caused him to arrest him, because the minister of the Sultan took sides (220) against him. Then a short while after the opposer ceased and al-Mustarshid reinvested him with the minister's robe, and ordered the notables of the empire to proceed 410 before him to the office. He was the first minister before whom the notables of the empire walked on foot. The minister, Ibn Sidqah, was one day sitting on the minister's cushion, and Sadid ad-Daulah, the son of al-Ambari, a drafting clerk, came into him, with some verses in his sleeve in which he had lampooned the minister. The paper fell from his sleeve, and the minister put out his hand quickly and took it. Amongst the verses on it was:

"You are he whose very existence is a wrong in a world of humiliation and wrong." "

When Sadid ad-Daulah saw it in the minister's hand, his strength departed through fear and shame. When the minister read it he understood the contents, and turned the lampoon from himself against Sadid ad-Daulah by saying, "I know these verses, amongst them is :

"They named him the upright in ignorance for he was free from all uprightness."

The minister composed this verse on the instant, and as- 411 Sadid, son of al-Ambari, was ashamed and refrained from reply. When the Sultan Sanjar purposed coming to Baghdad and threatened the Caliph, the minister, Ibn Sidqah, wrote to him, "If you make a move I will surely cut off all that is behind you and I will cut you off from it. If you go a 'mile,' I will surely go two 'miles' to you."

The minister, Abu 'Ali, the son of Sidqah, was sick at the end of his tenure of office, and al-Mustarshid visited him and recited :

"Through you we repelled the assaults of fate until when they attacked you, we were unable to repel them from you."

His condition continued to worsen till he died in the year 522. The ministry of the noble Abu'l Qasim 'Ali, son of Tarad az-Zainabi, a 'descendant' of al 'Abbas. They were known as the Zainabites because their mother Zainab was a 'great great grand-daughter' of al-'Abbas, and they were known from her. He was a transmitter of knowledge of the rules of the minister's office and of the methods of government. He it was who collected the people to depose ar-Rashid. He undertook his deposition and made excellent arrangements for taking the oath of allegiance to al-Muqtafi, having agreed with the Sultan Masu'd to do that. He acted as minister to two Caliphs, al-Mustarshid and al-Muqtafi. When al-Mustarshid appointed him minister and officially proclaimed his accession to office, he said to him, "Every man to whom the office of minister has come has been honoured by it, save you by whom the office of minister has been honoured." The best cushion was brought to him from the Caliph's palace, and he ordered the notables of the empire to proceed before him to the office. He stayed there for a while, then al-Mustarshid arrested him and dismissed him, than reinstated him with more pomp than before. When al-Mustarshid went out to war against Masu'd, as has already been explained, the minister went out with him. When that befell al-Mustarshid which befell him, the minister found favour with the Sultan Masu'd, who made a close friend of him, exalted his rank and took him in his company to Baghdad. The minister took responsibility for him at the deposition of ar-Rashid, and at the enthronement of al-Muqtafi in a manner which Masu'd recognised as deserving, and for which he thanked him. The rest of his history will be related when mention is made of his tenure of office for al-Muqtafi. The ministry for al-Mustarshid of the minister Ahmad Abu Nasr Ahmad, son of the minister Nizam a'l Mulk. He was generous and comely. He was minister for al-Mustarshid billah, and his conduct was applauded. When al-Mustarshid purposed building the wall of Baghdad he laid a levy on the people of 15,000

dinars. The minister Abu Nasr, took responsibility for it and paid for the people out of his own pocket. His tenure of office was not long, and he died in the year 544. The ministry for al-Mustarshid of Abu Sharwan, son of Khalid, son of Muhammad al-Qashani. He was one of the most eminent, chief and best of the people. He held office for Sultans and Caliphs. He disliked the idea of office and he was excused. Then he was urged to accept and he did so, unwillingly. It was he for whom al-Hariri composed the Maqamah of Hariri, and to him the latter alludes in its Preface when he says, "And I consulted one whose advice is an order and obedience to whom is gain." al-Arjani, the poet, asked the minister Abu Sharwan for a tent, and he sent him many dinars, saying to him, "Buy a tent with them." Then al-Arjani replied to that :

"How grand the son of Khalid who has brought to life  
for us generosity after it had gone away,  
I asked him for a tent in which to shelter, and he  
generously gave me a tentful of gold."

(222) Abu Sharwan, son of Khalid, was excessively humble, famous for that. He used to rise to everyone who came into him, and Ibn al-Habariyyah lampooned him, saying:

414 "This famous humility of yours springs from lack  
thereof, and because of it you are suspected of  
pride,  
You avoid giving a present to him who hopes, and  
rise to him, that is a movement against suppliants  
not in their favour."

Of him it was also said, in allusion to his frequent risings:

"I saw his cupbearer filling a flask in his servants' hand,  
And said, 'He needs not to drink medicine for he is  
not sick,  
'And he has no need thereof for he is always up-  
standing'."

Between Abu Sharwan, son of Khalid and the minister az-Zainabi lay enmity, mutual hatred and rivalry over the

ministerial office. The minister az-Zainabi was dismissed, and Abu Sharwan, son of Khalid, appointed. The people curried favour with him by denigrating az-Zainabi. al-Hais Bais the poet went into him, and recited to him a poem, which began :

“ For my fate, thanks !—both in the heart and by the mouth,—as it has replaced a kind one by a kind.”

Alluding to Abu Sharwan, when he replaced az-Zainabi. The people thought he did well in that, and took it as a proof of his fidelity and independence. Then Abu Sharwan, son of Khalid, died and az-Zainabi returned to office, and the people curried favour with by denigrating Abu Sharwan. al-Hais Bais went into him and quoted to him :

“ May you live long and may your sandal never slip, for I lost my fortitude on the day the son of Khalid was lost.”

- 415 Abu Sharwan died in the year 532. The days of al-Mustarshid billah and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled his son, ar-Rashid billah Abu Ja'afar Mansur, son of al-Mustarshid, to whom the oath of allegiance was taken subsequent to receipt of the news of his father's murder in the year 529. ar-Rashid prepared a numerous army, and proceeded to make war on Masu'd, who went towards al-'Iraq, seeking to rule it. He reached Baghdad with 5,000 horsemen, entered it and ar-Rashid refrained from fighting him, but went out thence to meet him. The Sultan Masu'd entered Baghdad, had a free hand in administering affairs in it, displayed justice, prevented (228) the troops from doing wrong, collected the judges and witnesses, and took their (evidence in) writing as to the incompetence of ar-Rashid. He wrote a signed document for the deposition of ar-Rashid, and made the judges confirm it. The minister az-Zainabi arranged that for him, for Masu'd had already asked his advice as to whom he should appoint as Caliph. He said to him, “ Our



master, there is a man fit for it." He asked him his name, and he replied, "Our master, if I name him I fear that he  
416 may be killed, but, when we enter Baghdad, I will name him to you." So when they needed to enthrone the Caliph, az-Zainabi nominated to him Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad al-Muqtafi, the paternal uncle of ar-Rashid. The oath of allegiance was taken to him and he was enthroned on the Caliph's throne. Then ar-Rashid did not get on well with him, and he went thence to Isfahan, at the gate of which a number of heretics attacked him and killed him. That was in the year 532, and his grave there is known. An account of the state of the ministry in his reign. When he succeeded to the Caliphate he appointed as minister Jalal ad-Din Abu'r-Rida Muhammad, son of Sidqah, whose tenure of office was not long. He feared what might occur and sought refuge with Zanki, son of Aqsanqar, prince of al-Mosul, who protected him and treated him well. Then when ar-Rashid left Baghdad he sought to employ this Abu'r-Rida in some capacity, other than the ministerial office. He died in the year 556, and his biography is not worth record. The period of ar-Rashid and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled his paternal uncle al-Muqtafi li amr Allah Abu 'Abdullah Muhammad, son of al-Mustazhir, to whom the oath of allegiance was taken in the year 530. al-Muqtafi was one of the best of the Caliphs. When Masu'd enthroned  
417 him and had the oath taken to him,—he had already taken all the gold, utensils and other furniture in the Caliph's palace and disposed his deputies in all the Provinces of al-'Iraq,—he sent to al-Muqtafi saying, "Consider what you and all who are dependent on you need, so that I may appoint fiefs for you for the purpose." Then al-Muqtafi sent to him saying, "We have in the palace eighty mules to transport water from the Tigris for our household's drinking water, so do you consider how much he will need who drinks daily the water carried by eighty mules." Then Masu'd said, "We have enthroned as Caliph a mighty man, may God Most High preserve us from his harm." In his reign occurred civil strife and wars

between him and the Persian Sultans, in which the victory lay with him, and in his reign revolted the vagabonds and evil doers, for the subjugation of whom he made (224) competent arrangements. al-Muqtafi died in the year 555. An account of the state of the ministry in his reign. The first of his ministers was az-Zainabi, minister to his brother al-Mustarshid, whom he appointed when the oath was taken to him because it was he who had arranged that, and recommended to Masu'd. He remained minister to al-Muqtafi for a while, then they became estranged, on account of which he became afraid of him and sought protection in the house of the Sultan. He stayed there for a while, secure from al-Muqtafi till there came about him from the Caliph a messenger, who permitted him to 418 return to his house with honour. So he went to his house and remained there for a while unemployed. His affairs deteriorated, his condition became poor, and he met great distress and extreme indigence, so much so that, falling ill and desiring a nosegay, he was unable to buy it. He had expended considerable wealth, when he was seeking protection in the Sultan's house, on his ladies' followers and the notables of his empire, for his gifts were lavish to most of these, as well as to others of the learned, visitors and supplicants. When he was ill with the illness of which he died, al-Muqtafi wrote a letter to him, by which he sought to win him over and promised him all fair (treatment). The minister quoted:

"She came, when the floods of death were between me and her, and was lavish with her intimacy when intimacy was no use."

He replied, "My testament is,—'Look after my house and my children'." When he died, al-Muqtafi took responsibility for all that of which his children and little ones had need, and he allotted to them considerable incomes. The ministry for al-Muqtafi of Nizam ad-din Abu Nasr al-Muzaffar, son of 'Ali, son of Muhammad, son of Jahir of Baghdad. He was familiar with the branches of knowledge, especially the Traditions of the

419 Prophet, but his tenure of office was not long, nor was anything in his biography worthy of record. The ministry for al-Muqtafi of Mu'tamin ad-Daulah Abu'l Qasim 'Ali, son of Sidqah. His house was one renowned in connection with the ministry, known for statecraft. Mu'tamin ad-Daulah was comely and good natured, but he had no knowledge of the principles of the ministry. He was exceedingly pious and charitable. The Caliph al-Muqtafi li amr Allah appointed him minister. They say that this Mu'tamin ad-Daulah the minister was little occupied with learning and a poor reader of books. He used constantly to apply to himself reading a single section of the Koran and a single book in literature. They said section and book were always before him, and he used to read them excellently, so that his real position was hidden from the people while he was in office, but, when he died, that became clear about him. (225) There was nothing in his biography worthy of record. The ministry for al-Muqtafi of 'Aun ad-Din Abu'l Muzaffar Yahya, son of Hubairah. His early upbringing was in a village known as ad-Dur in the districts of the Tigris, to-day known as ad-Dur of the minister, referring to the son of Hubairah. His father was a labourer in the said village, who used to urge his son to acquire letters and obtain useful (knowledge). 420 He used to go as a boy to Baghdad and bring him to the assemblies of the eminent, and to the eminent of the assemblies, and it was as has been said :

“ She had from herself delight. . . . ”

His father died when he was a youth, and he was alone with his occupation. The chances of fortune were fickle with him, he underwent hardships, and endured fearful poverty. He served in various capacities, but always exchanged an employ for one better than it, and continued to exchange one post for another more advanced than it till he was invested with the office of minister to al-Muqtafi. He remained in office for a while, his annual pay being 100,000 dinars. He was generous,

charitable, beneficent, at the end of each year he did not leave a single dirham in his treasury. al-Muqtafi and al-Mustanjid used to say that the house of al-'Abbas had never had a minister like Yahya, son of Hubairah, in all his circumstances. He exercised great force in controlling the Saljukid power and admirable craft. He was awe inspiring, forbearing and humble. When he became minister he entered the office with the official robe of honour on him, and he saw one of the servants of the office standing afar off, so he told him to come near, smiled  
 421 on his face, and ordered gold and a garment to be given to him. Then he said, "There is no God but God. I remember once when I entered this office and sat on one of the seats. This servant came and dragged me by the hand, saying, "Rise, for this is no place for you," and just now I saw him standing, with the mark of fear clear upon him, so I wished to be kind to him and dissipate his anxiety." One day he saw a soldier in the office, and he said to his chamberlain, "Give this soldier ten dinars and an ass load of grain, and say to him, 'Do not enter the office, and let us not see your face'." The people looked at one another and wished to know the reason for that. The minister perceived that, and said to them, "This soldier was a policeman in our village.  
 (226) One of the villagers had been killed, so this policeman came and arrested a number of the villagers. He took me with them tied to the side of his horse, did much to humiliate me, and beat me. Then he took something from each one of them and let them go, but I myself remained with him, and he said to me, 'Give me something and save yourself.' Then I replied, 'In truth, I have nothing.' Then he beat me and humiliated me again and said to me, 'Go and God curse you.' Then he let me go, and I do not want to see the appearance of his face." One of his pleasant thoughts was that the ministers before him used to take titles, one of which  
 422 was the chief of the ministers. But he ordered the clerks not to write this title amongst his titles, saying, "I have reflected about this, and I considered that God Most

High called Harun a minister till He,—mighty was the speaker,—said, speaking through the mouth of Moses, 'Give me as a minister from my people Harun, my brother, that through him I may increase my strength'." Also I heard as from the Prophet that he said, "I have two ministers from the folk of Heaven, Gabriel and Michael, and two ministers from the people of earth, Abu Bakr and 'Umar." He said, "God Most High has chosen for me friends and made them ministers and helpers." One of his acquaintances related an anecdote of him saying, "We were one day with him, and the chamberlain came in and said, 'At the door, Sir, is a man of al-'Iraq, who says that he is So and So; with him is a bundle in a roll, and he seeks admittance to you'. The minister recognised him and said to him "Bring him in." " He went on, "Then a tall old man of the folk of al-'Iraq entered, in rough cotton clothes, with a folded cloth for a turban, and on his feet old carpet slippers. He greeted the minister, and said, 'Sir, the mother of the little girls,'—meaning his wife,—'when she knew that I was coming to Baghdad, said to me, "Greet the old man Yahya, son of Hubairah, I have not seen him for a long time." She has baked for you this little loaf in your name.' The minister smiled and was pleased and said, 'God bless her,' then he put down that bundle in which was barley bread split, and sandwiched with mulberry preserve. The minister took from him two loaves and said, 'My share of this gift,' and he divided the rest among the notables present. He asked the man what he needed and what his wife needed and he fulfilled them, saying to those present, 'This was my neighbour in my village, and my partner in farming and I know him to be trustworthy'." (One) of his tricks was that there was, in one of the Persian territories, a man who, during every Friday sermon in the Congregational Mosque, used to rise and curse the Caliph, and pray for the Sultan. This reached the minister Ibn Hubairah so he summoned a person of the folk of Baghdad and ordered him to journey to that country. He gave him ten gold dinars and a flask full of indigo,

saying to him, "When you enter that country and are  
 (227) present on Friday in the Congregational Mosque and  
 see the man who curses the Caliph, go up to him,—  
 you being in the appearance of a merchant,—say amen  
 to his words and display tears at the cursing of the Caliph,  
 saying, 'Yes, indeed, may God do this and that to him !  
 Has any but he estranged me from my family and  
 country, and impoverished me ?' Then do so on a  
 Friday and say to him, "I have sworn to fill your mouth  
 with dinars," and stuff his mouth full of these dinars.  
 Then go away from him; and hasten to dye your face and  
 424 beard with this indigo, for it will make your face brown,  
 and your white hair black, and alter your appearance  
 so that you may not be known and killed." The man  
 did that and the dinars were poisoned, so that when that  
 man went in the evening to his house he continued having  
 convulsions till he died on the same day. The man  
 despatched made use of the dye and concealed himself  
 thereby and returned to Baghdad. Another of his tricks  
 was that he used to write small fine, despatches to the  
 outlying kings on thin parchment, slit the thigh skin of  
 the courier enough to permit insertion of them, then  
 leave it till it healed over, and despatch him wherever he  
 wished. An example of his firmness and constancy was  
 that one day he was sitting in the office, with the generals,  
 notables and important people before him, when a great  
 snake fell down from the ceiling, and dropped on to the  
 minister's shoulder. It crawled from the shoulder to his  
 lap, and everyone of the notables of the empire who were  
 there fled from his place, and they were too afraid to stay  
 in their seats. But the minister sat without moving from  
 his place, or changing his cushion as though nothing had  
 fallen on him. Then he ordered the slaves to kill it, and  
 it was killed in front of him. In short, Ibn Hubairah  
 was one of the best and most eminent and glorious of  
 ministers. He worked well to administer the empire  
 425 and organise the kingdom. He excelled in the branches of  
 learning and in composition, above the folk of his time.  
 Many verses are attributed to him, from them :

“ The certainty of a lad falls short of his ambition, for the force of the one inhibits the attainment of the other. When a man’s wealth is small his friends are few, and accounted as bad is all that he does well.”

At the end of his tenure of office, an ever increasing phlegm seized him and he died at prayer. That was in the year 360. The period of al-Muqtafi li amr Allah and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled his son al-Mustanjid billah Abu’l Muzaffar Yusuf, to whom the oath of allegiance was taken following the death of his father in the year 555. al-Mustanjid was energetic, and knowledgeable about affairs. When he succeeded to the Caliphate, he abolished the irregular taxes and extortions, except that he did bad things. He ‘abolished the privileges of’ the estates and returned them to a taxable status, a thing which bore hardly on the ‘Alids in al-Kufah and the sacred shrines. They attributed that to Ibn Hubairah, and they cursed him in the shrines. In his reign began the conquest of Egypt, and the Fatimid empire weakened. In the reign of his son al-Mustadhi, its conquest was completed by Salah ad-Din Yusuf, son of Ayyub. al-Mustanjid died through being strangled in the bath. The principal men of the empire strangled him after a severe illness which had seized him, because they were afraid for their own persons of him. That was in the year 566. An account of the state of the ministry in his reign. When the oath was taken to him, he confirmed Ibn Hubairah, the minister of his father, in his office, and increased his rank. The biography of Ibn Hubairah has already been given and there is no need to repeat it. The ministry of his son Muhammad, son of Yahya, son of Hubairah, entitled ‘Izz ad-Din. He succeeded to the office after his father’s death. He was eminent, a leader, imbued with chief like qualities, a poet, with elegant ideas, versed in letters and the prophetic traditions. He was imprisoned after the death of his father, and after his imprisonment no news of him was known. These two verses are recorded as being of his composition :

"How many events have I endured with seemly fortitude, and how often have I reckoned their bitterness as sweetness,

And how often have I said to him who blamed me for grief and despair 'Pass on your way'."

The ministry for al-Mustanjid billah of Sharif ad Din Abu Ja'far Muhammad, son of Abu'l Fath, son of Baladi. Before becoming minister he was an inspector in Wasit, and he showed whilst in that office there, force and perseverance, increased revenue and goods in abundance. He stood in high favour with al-Mustanjid, and a letter was sent as from the Caliph to Wasit requiring that he should become his minister. His position was strengthened by that, and he acted in the capacity of a minister while he was in Wasit. He wrote despatches and letters to the rulers of the bordering countries while he was in Wasit. Then he went up to Baghdad. The escort went out to meet him and in it were a number of the notables of the empire. Between 'Adad ad Din Abu'l Faraj Muhammad, son of the chief officer, the mayor of the Palace, and Ibn al-Baladi was a quarrel, and the former disliked going out to meet the latter, but the Caliph had ordered him to go out. Then he spent 5,000 dinars to be excused from going out to him. Then the Caliph said, "If he pays ready cash I will excuse him from going out." It was weighed and brought on the instant. When it had gone into the Treasury the Caliph ordered him to go out to meet the minister, and it was said to him, "This money is a fine for your disliking our wish and refusing honourable orders." So he lost his money, and went out, crossing to the west bank together with the escort. All the people went to Sarsar and met him there. When the eye of 'Adad ad-Din, the mayor of the palace, fell on the minister he wanted to dismount, but the minister shouted to him, "Indeed if you dismount I shall do so, too." Then he greeted him, and the two embraced on horse back and he went before him. The minister arrived opposite the  
 428 Taj, crossed by boat and presented himself before the



Caliph, who proclaimed his appointment to office, and invested him. He confirmed to him his duties in the important office matters and he undertook the burden of the ministry. His affairs continued to prosper till there befell al-Mustanjid what did befall, when 'Adad ad-Din, the mayor of the Palace, and the senior generals overcame him and put him into the bath when he was ill so that he died of the heat. Then 'Adad ad Din, the mayor of the Palace, brought out his son al-Mustadhi, and the oath of allegiance was taken to him. He laid on him conditions, and made him swearing binding oaths about them. One of them was that he should be minister and his son mayor of the Palace, So and So Commander of the troops, and So and So such and such. al-Mustadhi promised them that and swore a violent oath, then the oath was taken to him inside the Palace by the inner circle. He summoned the minister Ibn al-Baladi to take the oath, but when he came to the Palace, he was taken on one side and decapitated. He was taken out and thrown on a dungheap near the gate of the benches, then dragged along and thrown in the Tigris. He was of good behaviour, and his character applauded. The period of al-Mustanjid billah and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled his son al-Mustadhi Abu Muhammad al Hasan, son of al-Mustanjid billah, to whom the oath of allegiance was taken in the year 566. There was nothing wrong with his conduct, and in his reign the

429 good news of the conquest of Egypt and of the end of the Fatimid empire was brought to Baghdad. When he sat on the Caliph's throne he ordered the execution of his father's minister, Ibn al Baladi, and he died in the year 500.

(280) An account of the state of the ministry in his reign. The first of his ministers was 'Adad ad-Din, who was one of the most eminent and important of the people, and had been mayor of the Palace in the reign of al-Mustanjid. When there befell al-Mustanjid what did befall, 'Adad ad-Din took control and arranged to bring out al-Mustadhi from prison, to have the oath of allegiance taken to him, and make him take oaths. So al-Mustadhi appointed

him minister, and 'Adad ad-Din undertook the burden of the ministry satisfactorily. On the day of his sitting on the minister's cushion, he distributed much gold and grain to the dwellers in the shrines, mosques, schools and monasteries. He displayed unique nicety in the conduct of affairs, and his house was one famous for leadership. They were formerly known as the house of ar-Rufail. Ibn at-Ta'widhi, the Baghdad poet, was their poet, exclusively devoted to them ; most of his life was spent with them, and to them he addressed his words :

480 " I spent half my life praising them, thinking of them  
that they deserved it,

I have promised to finish it lampooning them, so,  
through them, has all my life been lost."

About them he composed many eulogies, one of which was :

" I always had with the house of ar-Rufail a place of  
retreat from tyranny when my only harvest was  
woe

And if I confess a fault,—to have praised other than  
them, well—the hungry bird's search is for grain,  
If the favour of the minister Muhammad comes back  
to me, then the far bourne is near and the difficult  
easy,

The minister whose counsel when the time is sick is  
as pitch wherewith the scabby camels are annealed."

The affairs of 'Adad ad-Din continued to prosper till al-Mustadhi dismissed him and arrested him. The manner of his arrest was that he was one day sitting on his cushion when one of the Caliph's servants burst in on him and said to him, " He has done without you." Then he shut his inkpot and brought the Turks and soldiers into his houses. They looted their contents, and the common people also entered, broke the chests of ebony and ivory with maces and took everything that was in them. Then 'Adad ad-Din, who was watching, went out and said to the Turks, "Are you not ashamed to do so to me? To enter my house? To eat my provisions?" But that

benefited him nothing, and not an hour elapsed ere his house became a waste. Then he was taken to the women's quarters and left in custody there for a while. Later (281) al-Mustadhi reinstated him in office, gave him authority 481 and gladdened him. The world appeared good to him and his position improved. His good deeds and charities were numerous and the people loved him, for he was generous and benevolent, noble souled. It is said that he did not ever buy less sugar for his house than in thousand dinars' worth. One of his slaves told an anecdote of him saying, "Once he needed a thousand dinars, but his soul was too proud to borrow from his sons or from any one else. He used to be familiar with me so he said to me, "My son, I need a thousand dinars which I will return to you after a few days." So I replied, "Certainly, Sir." Then I went away and brought him five thousand dinars and said, "Sir, these indeed I acquired through you, so take of them what you will." Then he looked down for a while and said, "I will not take a single grain of them, so take them and go away." Then he recited :

"The master who is followed does ill if he is seen to follow what is in the hands of his followers."

In his second tenure of office his affairs continued to prosper till the end of his period. Then he asked the Caliph's permission to make the pilgrimage and received it. He made preparations the like of which had never been seen, then he crossed over to the west bank from the 482 City of Peace, to go towards al-Hillah and al-Kufah, and thence to Makkah. Before him went a number of the notables of the empire. Then there met him at a place there, known as Qatafata, a man who said, "Sir, I am wronged," and he handed to him a paper which the minister took from him. The man leapt high upon him and struck him with a knife in his collar bone. Another attacked him from the other side, and struck him in his flank. Another attacked him with a drawn knife in his hand, but did not reach him. The people crowded

in on the three and killed them. Then the minister died. The burial prayers were said over him and he was buried in his grave. It is said that the three men who killed him were from the assassins of the Samaq mountain. One of the folk of Qatafata related an anecdote, sayng, "Two hours before the murder of the minister I entered a mosque there, in which I saw three men. They had put one of themselves in front of the niche and made him lie down. Then the other two men prayed over him the prayers for the dead. Then he rose and another lay down, and the other two prayed over him, till each of them had prayed over the other. I saw them but they did not see me. I marvelled at what they were doing. Then when the minister was killed and the three men were killed, I looked at their faces and they were they."

(232) The ministry of Zahir ad Din Abu Bakr Mansur, son of  
 438 Abu'l Qasim Nasr, son of al 'Atar. At the beginning of his career he was a merchant, then he mixed with the financiers, and spent money on al-Mustadhi who appointed him minister. He weighed heavily on the subjects, and the common folk used to hate him. He remained (in office) till al-Mustadhi died and au-Nasir succeeded. He was the last of al-Mustadhi's ministers. The period of al-Mustadhi and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled his son the Imam, au-Nasir li din Allah, Abu'l 'Abbas Ahmad, son of al-Mustadhi bi amr Allah, to whom the oath of allegiance was taken in the year 565. au-Nasir was one of the best and most eminent of the Caliphs, prudent in affairs, cautious, an administrator, feared, courageous, sensible, brave, strong, sharp witted and clever, of keen wit and perception, eloquent, with no gainsayer of the excellence of his knowledge nor of the rareness of his understanding. He conversed with the learned as converses an experienced man, he dealt with affairs of state as deals a prudent man. He shared the views of the Imamites. His reign was long and his power undisputed. He liked to take a personal interest in the affairs of the subjects, and every one whether of the lords or of the commons used to fear him and to be

afraid of him as though he were observing him in his own house. His spies and informers in the houses of the Sultans were numerous, also in the bordering country. Strange tales are told of him about such things. He composed books and both 'heard and gave lectures' on the Traditions of the Prophet. He was himself dubbed knight and he dubbed others. Many people of the nobility of the land as also foreigners received knight-hood at his hands. He shot with the arquebus, and many shot with him. He was unique in his time, the hero, *par excellence*, of his age. In his reign, the Seljukid regime completely finished. ar-Nasir's benefactions and foundations exceeded computation. He built guest houses, mosques, monasteries, of which the number passed all limit, yet, despite this, he was parsimonious. His time was spent in organising the affairs of his kingdom, in appointing and dismissing officials, in levying fines and acquiring wealth. It is said of him that he filled a cistern with gold, and one day saw that there remained something lacking in it to fill it full, so he poured a little something in, saying, "May you see me live to fill it," but he died before doing so. It is said that al-Mustansir saw that cistern, and said, "May you see me live to empty it," and he did so. ar-Nasir died in the year 622. An account of the state of the ministry in his time. When the oath of allegiance was taken to an-Nasir, he confirmed Ibn al 'Atar, his father's minister, in his office for a few days, then he disgraced him, had him arrested, and imprisoned him inside the Caliph's palace. Then, after some days, he brought him out dead, and handed him to his sister to prepare him for his burial. So she washed him and brought him out in a coffin on the head of a porter to bury him. Some of the people spied him and stoned him, whereupon the porter threw down the coffin and fled. The people took him out of the coffin, mutilated him, tied a rope on to his feet and penis, and dragged him along. They put a piece of wood in his hand, fouled it with dung, and shouted at him, "Sir, Zahir ad Din, endorse our petitions." One of the strange things that befell about

that was that one of the Turks built a bath and made its gutter pass out over the house of one of his neighbours, and caused damage to that neighbour by reason of that gutter, so that he complained thereof to the minister, who repelled him, did not take his hand and said to him, "If you do not keep quiet I will put your head in the gutter." It was said that when the crowd dragged 'Ibn al 'Atar and mutilated him, they passed with him by the door of the said bath, so that it chanced that he fell in the gutter, they dragged him in it for some paces, and the people marvelled at that. The ministry of Jalal ad-Din Abu'l Muzaffar 'Ubaidullah. At the start of his career he was one of the upright court witnesses, then his circumstances changed till he reached the ministry. Abu Nasir sent him with a numerous army to fight with the Sultan Tughril, son of Arsalan, son of Tughril, the Saljuk. The two met, the army of the Sultan was victorious, and the Caliph's army was routed. The minister stayed his ground and was taken prisoner. He remained for a while in captivity then was released, and went to Baghdad in disguise, but he did not live long after that. The ministry of Mu'izz ad Din Said, son of 'Ali, son of Hadidah the Ansari. He was an excellent man, straight living, in easy circumstances and well off. It is related that the syndic of al-Basrah, Abu Ja'far Muhammad, son of Abu Talib, the poet, went up to Baghdad to complain to this minister of an injustice of the inspector of al-Basrah.

(234) He recited to him a poem, which included :

"The tribes of the Ansar are not few but the house of  
 Ghanam are the best,  
 There Abu Ayyub was host to Muhammad in his  
 house, and the chosen one chose him.  
 My descent from him is clear, and you belong to that  
 tribe, so from it I can claim protection.  
 I have come to stay with you as he stayed with your  
 grandfather, and staying means protection,  
 For how long shall I be wronged when I claim kinship  
 with the Prophet and your folk are the Ansar?"

They said that, when the minister heard it, he took compassion on him; wept, gave him a robe of honour and presents, provided for his needs, and did him justice against the inspector of al-Basrah, whom he dismissed.

487 The said minister died out of office in the year 616. The ministry of Mu'id ad Din Abu'l Muzaffar Muhammad, son of Ahmad, son of al-Qasab. In origin he was a Persian. His father used to sell meat at the upper end of the Basrah men's road in Baghdad. He grew up occupied with the sciences and letters, and he excelled in the sciences of banking,—such as accountancy, surveying, land measurements, and taxation in kind. Then he acquired wisdom in the principles of the ministry. He had a strong mind and high ambition. He led armies and made conquests. He was equally good with the sword and the pen. He went to Khuzistan and conquered it, settled its affairs and the principles on which it should be administered, then he passed on to Persian country, together with the army, and ruled most of it. Then destiny overtook him and he died there. The ministry for au-Nasir of the Sayyid Nasir ad Din Nasir, son of Mahdi, the 'Alid, ar-Razi. He was a Mazandarani by birth and origin, Razi was his place of upbringing, in Baghdad he received his religious education and died. He was one of the most competent, excellent, foremost and discriminating of men. In his youth he occupied himself with letters, and taught himself a fair portion of them, then he acquired wisdom in official affairs in which he excelled. At the start of his career he used to act as agent for the syndic 'Izz ad Din al-Mustadi al-Qumi, the syndic for the whole of the country of Persia. From him he acquired the use of the principles of statecraft, for 'he' was one of the noblest men in the world, and of the greatest in leadership. When 'this' syndic was  
488 killed,—'Ala ad Din of the Shahs of Khwarism killed him, —his son the Syndic Sharf ad-din Muhammad fled, and made for the City of Peace to seek the protection of the Caliph an-Nasir. In his company was his agent Nasir ad-din, son of al-Mahdi, who was one of the wisest

(285) of men. Then an-Nasir examined him, saw him to be wise, intelligent, and upright. He began to consult him secretly on matters concerning the border kings, and in him he found complete experience of the affairs of the Persian Sultans, knowledge of their circumstances and fundamental matters, and of the characters of each one of them. Whenever an-Nasir asked his advice in any matter about that he used to find he hit the mark exactly, so he appropriated him to himself and gave him rank of Senior Syndic of the house of Talib. Then he entrusted him with the affairs of the ministry. He remained in office for a while, during which its affairs ran perfectly. He was generous, charitable, ambitious, and noble souled. It was related of him that, one day, he was sitting on the minister's cushion, with a large piece of fragrant wood in his hand. The minister saw one of the high officials present glancing at it, and said to him, "Do you like this?" Then he summoned him and gave it to him. The man got up to get out. Then after the conclusion of the minister's audience, he summoned him quickly and said to him, "Do you want to shame us and to verify the proverb at our expense, that "he perfumed him naked?" Then he ordered a robe of honour to be given to him, and handed to him a chest of clothes, saying to him, "Perfume yourself in these clothes." The Persian poet al-Abhari praised him in a famous Persian poem, containing amongst its praises :

"He is the minister for both East and West, who has made victorious the nation and the faith, who will through his lofty intelligence be ever victorious,

The sound of your pen, which, when you are at work to resolve the difficulties of public affairs, resembles David's melodious chanting of the psalms . . "

al-Abhari sent it with a merchant in a certain caravan, saying to the merchant, "Take it to the minister, and, if you can, do not let him know its composer." He did so, and when the poem was presented to the minister, he approved it, asked for the merchant and handed to



him a thousand gold dinars, saying, "Hand these to al-Abhari, and do not tell him from whom they are." an-Nasir had him arrested against his will on account of matters necessitating that. He was arrested in the year 640, and transferred to a house in the Caliph's palace, when he remained under surveillance, but honourably and well treated, till he died still under surveillance in the year 617. The ministry for an-Nasir of Mu'id ad-din Muhammad, son of Muhammad, son of 'Abd al-Karim Barar al-Qumi.<sup>440</sup> He was originally and by birth from Qum, but grew up and died in Baghdad. He was descended from Miqdad, son of al-Aswad al Kindi. He was knowledgeable in the affairs of the kingdom, experienced in the methods of state craft, knowing its principles, understanding the organisation of the offices, a good accountant,<sup>(226)</sup> copiously read in the arts of letters, a memoriser of the best poetry, a reciter of interesting anecdotes. He was patient in the conduct of official affairs, continuously occupied with them from morning to evening. At the start of his career he clung to the service of the Persian sultans, and used to resort to one of the Persian ministers in Isfahan in the stage of his youth before he was twenty years old. That minister had tired of the clerks he had in his service, accused them of disobeying his orders, drove them from him and used al-Qumi as a clerk, thinking that, on account of his extreme youth, he would not dare to disobey what he was advised to do. al-Qumi remained for a while, as a clerk in his service, then one day a quantity of woven clothes were brought before the minister, some whole and some rent. al-Qumi was summoned before him to check the number and take them to the store. The minister was calling out to him such and such whole clothes, and al-Qumi was writing such and such clothes, omitting to write the word whole. The minister said to him,<sup>441</sup> "Why do you not write as I dictate to you?" He replied, "Sir, there is no need to mention whole, because when I come to mention the rent clothes, I will record underneath them that they are rent, so that the distinguishing of the rent by specification will show that those not

designated as rent are whole." The minister answered, "No, but write as I dictate." Then al-Qumi answered him back, at which the minister was angry, raised his voice, and turned to those present, saying, "I dismissed the senior clerks who were in my service because of their disobedience and their countering what I said, and I took on this lad as clerk, thinking that, on account of his extreme youth, he would not be so bold and disobedient as they, but, in fact, he is more disobedient than those." Then one of the Sultan's servants who had been sitting near the minister's audience room went out from his presence and enquired about so much shouting and the anger of the minister. The servant was told the facts of what had happened between the minister and al-Qumi. Then he entered and told the Sultan what was said, and the latter said to him, "Go out and say to the minister, the truth is as the youthful clerk averred." al-Qumi became important in the people's eyes, and his position was advanced. He became intimate with that servant who used to give him advice, trusted him and became familiar with him. It chanced that the Sultan ordered 442 this servant and another man to go with a message to the office of the Caliph, and the servant asked that al-Qumi should go with him. So he was sent with him, and they proceeded to Baghdad. The servant and the companion were presented to the minister, Ibn al-Qasab. They delivered the message to him orally, and heard the answer, which did not correspond to the message, but was a sort (237) of evasion. The servant and his companion were content with that reply and were not awake to its deceit. They went out, but al-Qumi returned and stood in front of the minister, and spoke to him privately, saying, "Sir; the reply did not correspond to that brought by the slaves." The minister answered him, "You have said truly, but leave them in their folly, and do not put them wise to it." He replied, "Certainly." Then Ibn al-Qasab wrote to the Caliph, saying to him, "So and So has come with the servant of the Sultan. The lad Qumi was quick enough to notice such and such, and such as he should

be rewarded, well treated, and taken into service." Then the Caliph wrote to him ordering him not to permit him to travel with them, an excuse was manufactured for him, and he was separated from them. Then they proceeded, but al-Qumi remained in Baghdad, and was appointed to the chancellery, where he remained for a while, then was appointed minister. His services to the empire were of a nature never given by a man of his sort before, he was unique in his time in everything, 443 good, very kind, beneficent and charitable. His slave Badr ad-din Ayyar related an anecdote of him, saying, "One night he asked for a sweet of fruits. At once several dishes of it were made and brought before him on that night. Then he said to me, 'Ayyar, can you keep this sweet for me all the time till the day of resurrection?' I replied, "Sir, how can that be?' Can this be done?" He answered, 'Yes. Go at once to the mosque of Musa and al-Jawad, and place these dishes before the 'Alid orphans, then they will be kept for me continuously till the day of resurrection.' Ayyar continued, "So I said, 'Certainly,' and I went,—it was midnight,—to the mosque, opened the doors, woke the orphans, put the dishes before them and returned." al-Qumi's career continued to prosper, he became minister to ar-Nasir, then to az-Zahir, then to al-Mustansir, until the last named had him arrested and imprisoned him inside the Caliph's palace. He fell sick, was brought out ill and died in the year 629. The period of an-Nasir li din Allah and his ministers ended, then, after him ruled his son Abu Nasr Muhammad az-Zahir bi amr Allah, son of an-Nasir li din Allah, who was crowned in the year 622. His reign was not long, nor did anything occur therein 444 worth record save the burning of the dome of the noble (238) shrine of Musa and al-Jawad. az-Zahir began to rebuild it but he died before he had finished and al-Mustansir completed it. Again it was az-Zahir who constructed this new bridge to be found to-day in Baghdad. When he had finished, the poets made encomia on it in which they described the bridge. One of those who

composed verses on that subject was Muwaffaq ad-din al-Qasim, son of Abu'l Hadid, a chancellery clerk, who said :

“ An Imam who has forbidden the shame of beggary  
and has done the necessary generous deeds ;  
He made a path across the Tigris for him who comes  
thereto and him who goes,  
And paralleled the bridge on one side with a new  
bridge on the other side,  
Like two lines on white paper which the writer's pen  
has faired,  
Like two necklaces of amber joined on the white  
breasts of a full breasted girl,  
Like two lines of camels standing in the morning  
on a wide bare place.”

445 az-Zahir died in the year 623. An account of the state of the ministry in his reign. He confirmed al-Qumi, his father's minister, in his office and did not appoint anyone else. Then, after him, ruled his son Abu Ja'afar al-Mansur al-Mustansir billah, to whom the oath of allegiance was taken in the year 623. al-Mustansir was energetic, most lavish, rivalling the wind in generosity and charity. His gifts and presents were too well known to need mention, and too great to be reckoned. If it were said that there were none among the 'Abbasid Caliphs like him, the sayer would be speaking truly. His are noble monuments, the greatest of which is the Mustansariyyah, which is too great to be described, and too well known to need description. Besides them are the Khan Harbi and its bridge, the Khan Nahr Sabis in the districts of Wasit, the Khan al-Kharnini and other mosques, monasteries and rest houses. al-Mustansir used to say, “ I fear that God will not reward me for my gifts and presents, because ‘ He ’ says, ‘ You will not attain good works till you spend from that which you love,’ and to me there is no difference  
(239) between earth and gold.” His reign was good, in his time the world was at peace, good deeds abounded, and  
446 the Provinces were populous. In his reign Irbil was

conquered. al-Mustansir sent against it Iqbal, the cup-bearer, and with him the Quartermaster-general. That was on the death of its prince, Muzaffar ad-din, son of Zain ad-din 'Ali Kaujak. al-Mastansir died in the year 640. An account of the state of the ministry in his reign. When the oath was taken to him, he confirmed al-Qumi, minister to his father and to his grandfather, in his office for some years, then had him arrested and there befell him what has already been recounted. The ministry of Nasir ad-din, Abu al-Azhar Ahmad, son of Muhammad, son of an-Naqid. Then, after al-Qumi, al-Mustansir appointed Abu al-Azhar (etc.). At the start of his career he was agent to al-Mustansir. He undertook the cares of office well, and administered the kingdom satisfactorily. He kept his word strictly, was a strong administrator, much feared by the bankers, and he cut short those who wished to further their interests or do ill. It is said that he was lampooned in two verses, and that when he heard them, he approved them. They were :

“ Our minister is ascetic, and the people have become ascetics because of him, so all of pleasures are deprived,

His days are like the month of fasting, empty of ill doing, but containing hunger and thirst.”

- 447 Good fortune continued to serve him to the end of his life. One of the pieces of good luck,—and it was a marvellous coincidence,—is the story told of him that, before he became minister, on a certain feast day he caused many pastries to be made. He wanted to make fun of a friend of his and gave orders that seventy of the pastries should be stuffed with cotton seed and bran, and put on one side, while he had many pastries made of the normal kind. He rode to the Caliph's palace, and the latter asked him to have some pastries made. He mentioned that he had some ready made at his house, and ordered a servant he had to bring the pastries he had at home. The servant went away not knowing about those stuffed with cotton seed, and he mixed them all up, and put them on dishes

to take to the Caliph's palace. The men servants and maid servants came and said, "Give us our share of these," and they took a hundred pastries from him. The servant took the dishes and what was on them to the  
 (240) Caliph's palace. When the minister returned home he asked about the pastries stuffed with cotton seed. They replied, "We do not know anything about that. So and So the servant came and mixed them all up, took them and went away." Then he made certain that he was  
 448 undone, and his strength almost left him through fear and shame, and he said, "Are none of them at all left?" They replied "The maid servants and men servants took out of them about a hundred pastries," so they were brought and opened in front of him and the seventy pastries stuffed with cotton seed were found, all had been taken by the men servants and maid servants amongst all those which they had taken for themselves, not a single one had become separated (and gone) to the Caliph's palace. Nasir ad-din died in the year 642, in the Caliphate of al-Mustasim. The period of al-Mustansir and his ministers ended, then, after him, ruled his son, Abu Ahmad 'Abdullah al-Musta'sim billah, to whom the oath of allegiance was taken in the year 640, and who was the last of the Caliphs. al-Musta'sim was a good man, religious, easy of approach, gentle natured, chaste in word and deed. He knew by heart God's book, and wrote a good hand. He was good tempered and opposed to violence, but of unsound judgment and lacking in force, with little experience of affairs of state. Most of his time was spent in listening to music and diverting himself with buffoons. Sometimes he used to sit in his  
 449 library in a useless way. His friends, all of whom were ignorant men from the dregs of the common people,—except his minister, Mu'id ad-din Muhammad, son of al-'Alqumi,—used to influence him. He<sup>1</sup> was one of the most eminent of the people and the most sensible of men, but his hands were tied and his advice rejected. Morning and evening he expected dismissal and arrest. The custom

<sup>1</sup> The minister.

of most of the Caliphs was to imprison their children and relations, and this continued to be their practice to the end of the reign of al-Mustansir. But when al-Musta'sim succeeded, he freed his three children and did not imprison them. They were the senior Amir, Abu al-'Abbas Ahmad, whom the people called Abu Bakr, though incorrectly. They only so called him because when al-Karkh was looted the responsibility of that was attributed to him, and it was said that it was he who advised that : the middle Amir, Abu al-fada'il 'Abd ar-Rahman, an energetic man who used to go out before the Sultan Hulaku, and whose words met with a favourable reception from his Highness the Sultan : and the junior Amir, Abu' (241) Manaqib. Safi ad-Din 'Abd al-Mu'min, son of Fakhr al-Armuwi, who at the end of the reign of al-Musta'sim became a favourite of his and intimate with him, told me that he made a new library towards the end of his reign, to which he transferred some of the valuable books and the keys of which he handed to 'Abd al-Mu'min. Abdu'l Mu'min used to sit at the door of the library and copy 450 for him what he wanted. When the Caliph fancied sitting in the library he would come to it and pass by the outer library, which had been entrusted to the Shaikh Sadr ad-din 'Ali, son of an-Niyar. He said,—I mean, 'Abd al-Mu'min,—“ I was sitting in a little room, copying, where there was a couch for the Caliph's use, on which he used to sit when he came there, and over which a coverlet had been spread to keep the dust off it. A young eunuch came and went to sleep near the said couch,—sound to sleep,—and turned to and fro till he wrapped himself up in that coverlet spread over the bench. He went on turning till he was quite wrapped up in that coverlet. His feet were near the pillow, and they pushed till they came right on the pillow.” He continued, “ I was occupied with the copying, when I perceived a footstep in the hall ; I looked and there was the Caliph beckoning to me, and treading lightly. I rose to go to him in alarm, and kissed the ground. Then he said to me, ‘ This young eunuch who has gone to sleep ; if

he wakes and knows that I have seen him in this condition, his gall bladder will split through fear. So do you rouse  
 451 him gently, and I will go out into the garden then come back'." He said, "The Caliph went out, and I went in to the eunuch and roused him up. He woke up and we arranged the couch. Then the Caliph came in." A man of Baghdad told me a story, saying, "I was told that the Shaikh Sadr ad-din, son of al-Niyyar, said, 'Once I went into the library, according to my custom. In my sleeve was a handkerchief containing many memoranda from a number of suppliants. I threw down the handkerchief containing the memoranda in my place, then I got up for some reason, and when I returned to the library after a while, I shook out the memoranda from the handkerchief to study them, and to give precedence to the important ones. I looked at them all, and on them was the endorsement of the Caliph replying to everything that was in them. Then I knew that the Caliph had come to the library while I was out, had seen the handkerchief containing the memoranda, had opened it and read them all'." al-Musta'sim was the last Caliph of  
 (242) the 'Abbasid empire in Baghdad. Nothing befell in the reign of al-Musta'sim worthy of record save the looting of al-Karkh and the harm done by the Turks. At the end of his reign the rumours of the arrival of the Mongol army accompanying the Sultan Hulaku became stronger, but that did not elicit determination from him nor evoke in him zeal nor create in him purpose. Whenever news of any precautions or preparations on the part of the Sultan was heard, on the part of the Caliph were manifested  
 452 his shortcomings in the way of negligence and carelessness. He did not appreciate correctly the state of affairs, and he did not properly understand this dynasty,—may God facilitate its beneficence and exalt its rule. His minister, Mu'id ad-din, son of al-'Alqumi, realised the true state of affairs and wrote to him to warn him and to rouse him. He advised him to awake, to take precautions and make preparations, but he only became ever more heedless, and his intimates suggested to him that there



was no great danger in this and nothing to be afraid of, but that the minister ~~was~~ magnifying this in order to exalt his own position, and to extract on account of it monies wherewith ostensibly to equip the forces which in reality he would appropriate himself. The heedlessness of the Caliph continued to increase, and the wakefulness of the other side to augment, till the Sultan's army came to Hamadhan, where it stayed for a little while. Then the messengers of the Sultan came in continuous succession to the office of al-Musta'sim. The choice from the Caliph's office fell on the son of the mayor of the Palace, who was Sharf ad-din 'Abdullah, son of al-Jauzi, and he was sent as an ambassador to His Highness the Mongol Sultan in Hamadhan. When he arrived and he<sup>1</sup> heard his reply, he knew that the reply was meant to deceive and gain time, so then a beginning was made with the attack on Baghdad. He equipped the soldiers for it, and a numerous Mongol army set forth, under  
 453 their general Baju, to Takrit, in order thence to cross over to the west bank, and to attack Baghdad from the western side, while the Sultan's own army attacked it from the east. When Baju's army had crossed at Takrit, and descended to the districts of Baghdad the folk of the Tigris, al-Ishaqi, Nahr Malik and Nahr Isa fled in fright and entered the city with their women and their children, till a man or a woman would throw themselves into the water, and a ferryman to ferry someone across in a boat from bank to bank would take for his hire a bracelet of gold, or embroidered brocade, or a number of dinars. When the Sultan's army reached the Tigris,—it was over 3,0000 horsemen,—the Caliph's army under the Commander-in-chief Mujahid ad-Din Aibek, the Secretary,  
 (248) met on the bank west of Baghdad near the town, and, initially, victory lay with the army of the Caliph. Then the Sultan's army attacked a second time, and utterly routed them, killing and making prisoner. In this they were helped by a canal they opened during the night, so

<sup>1</sup> Hulaku.

that the mud lay thick on the road taken by the fugitives so that none of them escaped save he who threw himself into the water, or he who entered the desert and thereby went to Syria. The Secretary escaped with a number of  
 454 soldiers and reached Baghdad. Bajju drove on till he entered the town by the west bank, and halted his soldiers opposite the Taj (palace). His soldiers reconnoitred between the houses. He stayed opposite the Taj several days. As for the Sultan's army, on Friday, the fourth of Muharram in the year 656, a great dust cloud rose to the east of Baghdad on the Ba'quba road so that the town was blinded, and the people alarmed thereat. They went up to the tops of the houses and minarets to watch. Then the dust of the Sultan's army and cavalry, his camp followers and pack animals, which covered the face of the earth, cleared away. They invested Baghdad on every side, then they began to make use of the methods of a siege, and the Caliph's army to repel and to oppose until the nineteenth day of Muharram, when the people suddenly saw the Mongol standards appear on the wall of Baghdad by the Tower called the Persian Tower, near one of the gates of Baghdad, called Kaludhi gate. This tower was the shortest of the towers of the wall. The Sultan's army effected an entry by storm, there ensued a sudden slaughter and great looting, the brief statement of which would shock the hearer, how much more therefore recapitulation in detail! Things happened which I shall not record, imagine them and do not  
 455 ask for a description. The Sultan ordered the Caliph with his women and children to be brought out to him, so they went out, the Caliph presented himself before the Mongol emperor, and it is said that he was reprimanded and blamed in terms which amounted to an accusation against him of weakness, incompetence, and carelessness. Then he and his grown up children were referred to the Mongol code, whilst his daughters were made prisoners. Then al-Musta'sim suffered martyrdom in the fourth of Safar in the year 656. An account of the state of the ministry in his reign. When he ascended he confirmed

his father's minister, Nasir ad-din Ahmad, son of an-Naqid, in his office till he died. When he died he appointed (244) Mu'id. The ministry of Mu'id. He was of the tribe of Asd. Their origin was from the Nile. His grandfather was called al-'Alqumi, because he dug a canal called by that name, for the digging of which the Sultan's noble command had issued. He was also called al-Qazani. In his youth he was occupied with letters in which he excelled. He wrote a good hand, composed eloquent despatches, and administered competently. He was an excellent man, perfect, intelligent, generous, grave, a lover of power, a keeper of great state, a leader who adhered to the principles of leadership, experienced in the methods of statecraft, dexterous in use of the instruments of the ministry. He loved scholars, and favoured the learned. He collected many valuable books. His son, Sharf ad-din Abu'l Qasim 'Ali, told me an anecdote, saying, "My father's library contained 10,000 bound valuable books. People composed books in his honour, One of those who did this was as-Saghani, the lexicographer, who composed in his honour *The Ocean*, a large and important work on the Arabic language. 'Izz ad-din 'Abdal-Hamid, son of 'Abd al-Hadid composed, in his honour, the book *Commentary on the Highway of Eloquence*, in twenty bound volumes. He rewarded them both, and gave both of them a good present. He was praised. Poets praised him and eminent men sought benefit from him. One of those who praised him was Kamal ad-din al-Buqiyi in a poem, which included :

"Mu'id ad-din Abu Talib, Muhammad, son of al-'Alqumi, the minister."

This verse is good. It contains his title, his family name, his proper name, the name of his father and his profession. Mu'id ad-din the minister was scrupulous in respect of official monies and those of the subjects, blameless, above that sort of thing. It is said that Badr ad-din, prince of al-Mosul gave him a present containing books, clothes, and nice things, of which the value was 10,000

dinars. When it came to the minister he brought it to the Caliph's service, saying, "The prince of al-Mosul has given me this present, and I am ashamed to return it to him, so I have brought it and ask you to accept it," and he accepted it. Then he sent to Badr ad-din as a return present some nice things from Baghdad, of which the value was 12,000 dinars, and asked him not to send him further presents. All the Caliph's intimates disliked him and were jealous of him, but the Caliph trusted him and liked him. They exercised great influence with him<sup>1</sup> against him,<sup>2</sup> and tied his hands in respect of most affairs. The people accused him of conspiracy, but that was incorrect. One of the strongest proofs that he was no conspirator is his secure position in this empire, for when the Sultan Hulaku conquered Baghdad and put the Caliph to death, he entrusted the town to the minister, treated him well and gave him authority. Had he conspired against the Caliph he would not have been trusted. Kamal ad-din Ahmad, son of adh-Dahhak, who was 'his' sister's son told me that when the Sultan Hulaku stopped at Baghdad he sent to ask the minister to come out to him. He said, "The Caliph sent and asked for the minister. He came to him and I was with him. Then the Caliph said to him, 'The Sultan has sent to ask for you and you should go out to him.' So the minister disagreed with that, and said, 'Sir, if I go out who will administer the town? Who will undertake important business?' The Caliph replied, 'You must go out'." He went on, "Then he said, 'Certainly'." He went to his house, made ready to go out, then went out. When he came before the Sultan and his speech was heard, he had a favourable reception. The one who furthered his interests with His Highness the Sultan was the minister as-Sa'id Nasir ad-din Muhammad at-Tusi. When Baghdad was conquered, it was entrusted to him and to 'Ali Bihadur ash-Shahnah. The minister remained for some months then fell ill and died in Jumada'l Ula in the year 656. The empire of the 'Abbasids and their

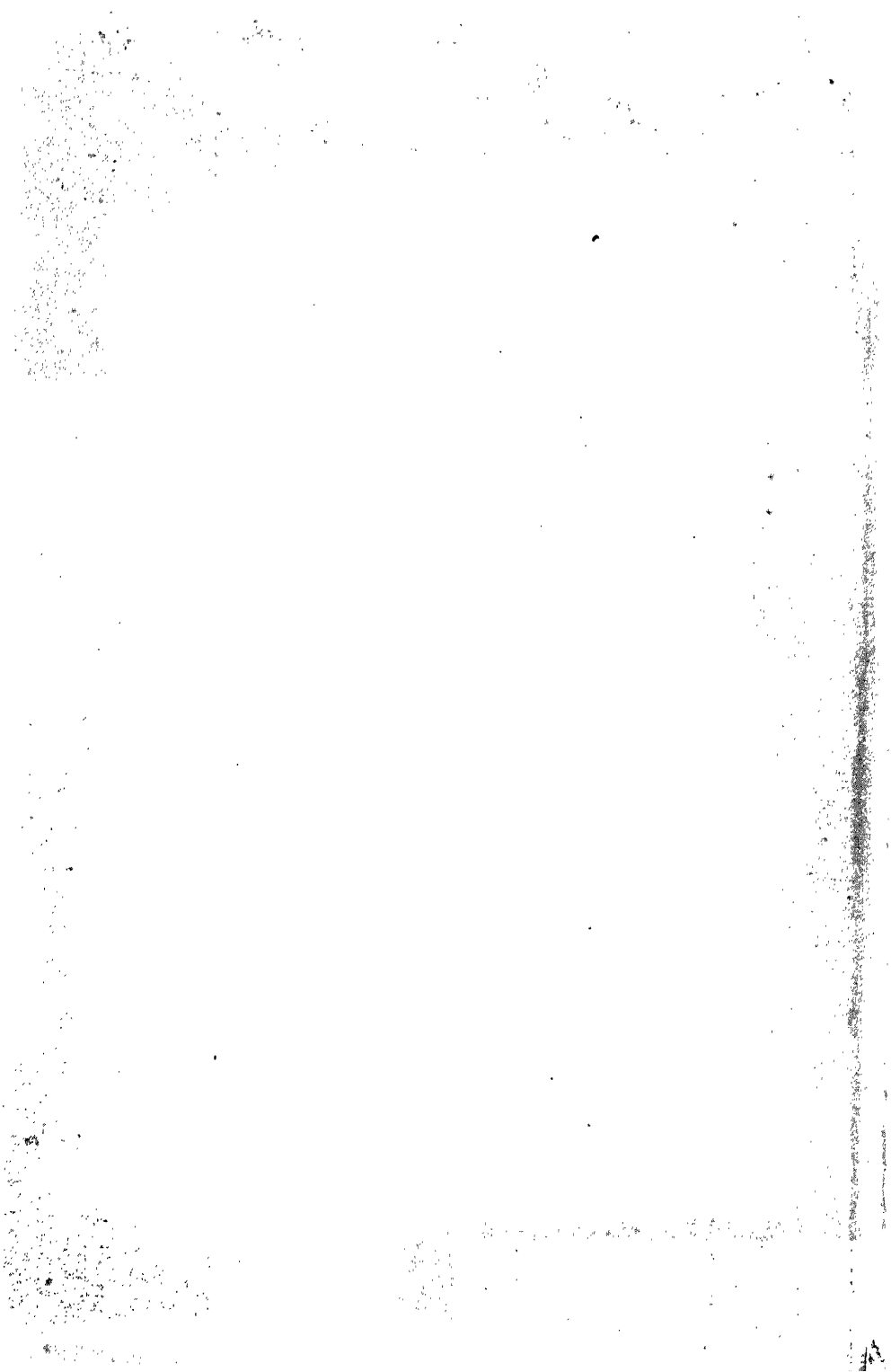
<sup>1</sup> Caliph. <sup>2</sup> The minister.

ministers is ended, and with that is ended the book. Praise be to the sole God, and His blessings and peace on our Lord Muhammad, the Prophet, and his excellent and pure family. Its composer completed its composition and transcription beginning the first of Jumada'l akhirah in the year 701 and ending the fifth of Shawwal in the said year, at al-Mosul the hump backed. This is his handwriting, may God reward him.

THE END







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